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The House of Fear;

Or, *PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES* By T. C. HARBAUGH

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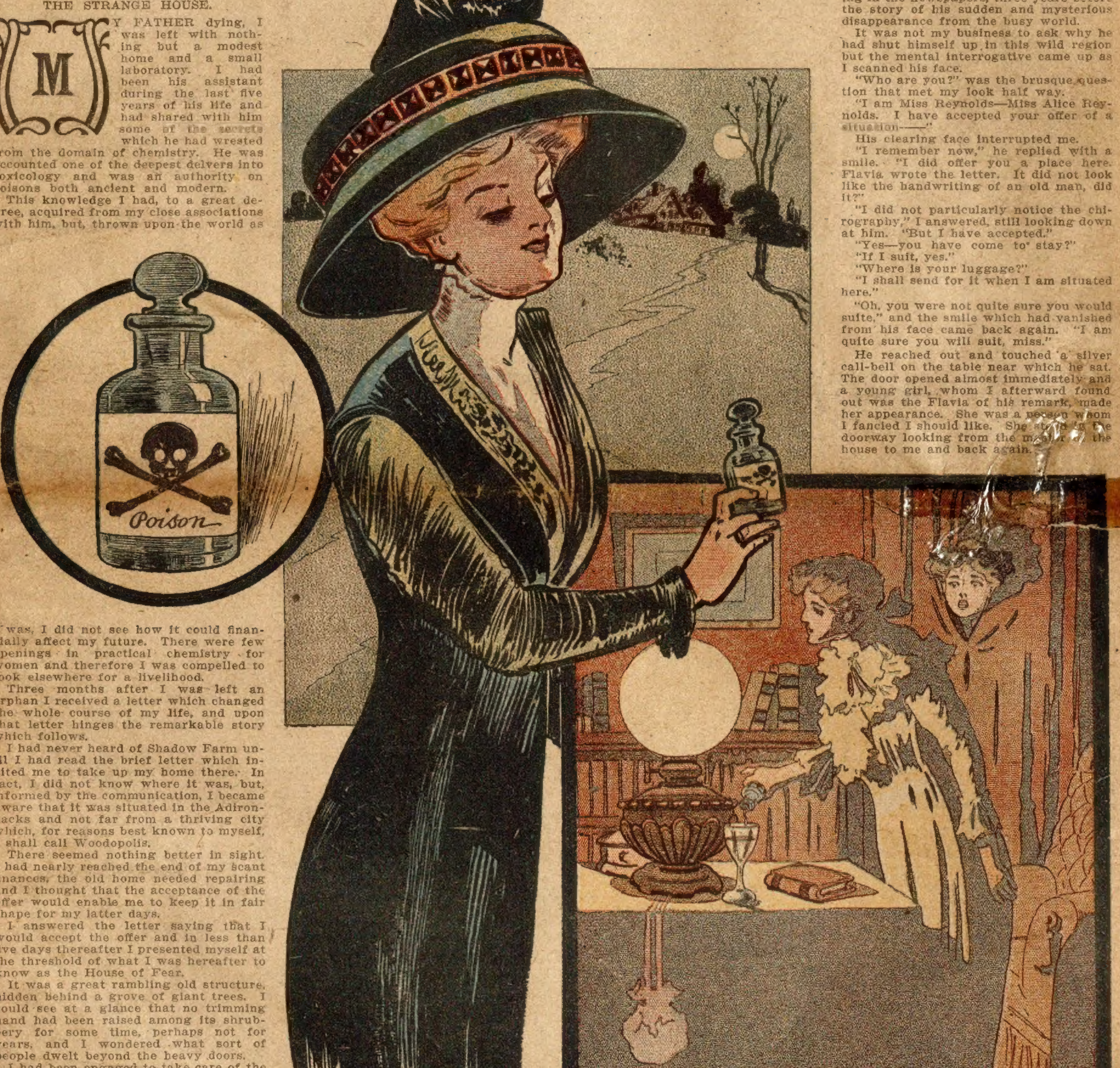
CHAPTER I.

THE STRANGE HOUSE.

MY FATHER dying, I was left with nothing but a modest home and a small laboratory. I had been his assistant during the last five years of his life and had shared with him some of the secrets which he had wrested from the domain of chemistry. He was accounted one of the deepest delvers into toxicology and was an authority on poisons both ancient and modern.

This knowledge I had, to a great degree, acquired from my close associations with him, but, thrown upon the world as I was, I did not see how it could financially affect my future. There were few openings in practical chemistry for women and therefore I was compelled to look elsewhere for a livelihood.



Three months after I was left an orphan I received a letter which changed the whole course of my life, and upon that letter hinges the remarkable story which follows.

I had never heard of Shadow Farm until I had read the brief letter which invited me to take up my home there. In fact, I did not know where it was, but, informed by the communication, I became aware that it was situated in the Adirondacks and not far from a thriving city which, for reasons best known to myself, I shall call Woodopolis.

There seemed nothing better in sight. I had nearly reached the end of my scant finances, the old home needed repairing and I thought that the acceptance of the offer would enable me to keep it in fair shape for my latter days.

I answered the letter saying that I would accept the offer and in less than five days thereafter I presented myself at the threshold of what I was hereafter to know as the House of Fear.

It was a great rambling old structure, hidden behind a grove of giant trees. I could see at a glance that no trimming hand had been raised among its shrubbery for some time, perhaps not for years, and I wondered what sort of people dwelt beyond the heavy doors.

I had been engaged to take care of the owner of the place, but the letter had not even indicated the sex of that person, and I was totally unaware of it till I stood in the large parlor and looked upon the occupant of a chair which stood in the center of the room.

Then I perceived that my charge was a man.

He was fifty, perhaps older, a man with great shoulders which recalled stories I had read of Hercules. His face was cleanly shaven and his eyes of the deepest blue. But in the depths of those orbs was a sad look which went instantly to my heart. He was clad in a loose-fitting reading habit and his feet were encased in slippers which had lost some of their original embroidery. About this lonely personage was an air of solitude, and, when he turned his face towards me, I thought a tremor of fear quivered his lips.

This man was Rostan Gosnold, once a power in the financial world, and when he told me his name I remembered reading in the newspapers, three years before the story of his sudden and mysterious disappearance from the busy world.

It was not my business to ask why he had shut himself up in this wild region but the mental interrogative came up as I scanned his face.

"Who are you?" was the brusque question that met my look half way.

"I am Miss Reynolds—Miss Alice Reynolds. I have accepted your offer of a situation——"

His clearing face interrupted me.

"I remember now," he replied with a smile. "I did offer you a place here. Flavia wrote the letter. It did not look like the handwriting of an old man, did it?"

"I did not particularly notice the chirography," I answered, still looking down at him. "But I have accepted."

"Yes—you have come to stay?"

"If I suit, yes."

"Where is your luggage?"

"I shall send for it when I am situated here."

"Oh, you were not quite sure you would suite," and the smile which had vanished from his face came back again. "I am quite sure you will suit, miss."

He reached out and touched a silver call-bell on the table near which he sat. The door opened almost immediately and a young girl, whom I afterward found out was the Flavia of his remark, made her appearance. She was a person whom I fancied I should like. She stood in the doorway looking from the master of the house to me and back again.

"You will show Miss Reynolds to her apartment, Flavia," said Mr. Gosnold. "She is going to be one of us hence-forth." He paused and turned away.

Following the maid, I went up a broad staircase and was conducted to a well-furnished room on the second floor and not far from the main landing.

As I had reached Shadow Farm late in the afternoon my new abode was not very cheerful, owing, in a measure, to the tall trees outside, which darkened it. The girl paused at the door in leaving and studied my face, pitifully, I thought.

"I hope we shall be friends, Flavia," said I, looking at her and noticing that she was very white and quite pretty.

"I hope so, too," she returned in a voice scarcely raised above a whipser.

"How long have you been here?"

"Five months."

"Then," said I, "you know all about the place?"

"No, not all, and none of us do," was the answer as the girl started.

It was a singular reply and I thought of it afterward.

"I have never lived in the country," I continued, as the girl lingered. "I have been raised in the city, and but for the death of my father, I should not be here today."

"No?"

"Separation of kindred often changes one's whole life. I trust I shall prove satisfactory to Mr. Gosnold."

"I have no doubt of that, but——"

She broke off so suddenly that I actually started. I pretended not to have noticed the suspension of the sentence.

"I like the place already," I resumed as cheerily as I could. "We, you and I, Flavia, shall take good care of Mr. Gosnold. Might I ask what is his malady?"

"That is the puzzle," said the girl, coming over to me and leaning slightly against the high-posted bedstead. "I trust you may be able to find out."

"I?"

"Your father was a great chemist, was he not?"

"My father dabbled a great deal in toxicology," said I.

"Why, that is what Mr. Gosnold said," was the response. "I think that is why he wanted you at Shadow Farm."

"What!" cried I, involuntarily seizing the girl's arm, "you don't mean to tell me that——"

"Not quit so loud," broke in the girl "Though we are alone here, walls are said to have ears. This is a strange house, as you will discover. I don't know what to think of it. Somehow or other, I am held here by links of steel. I fear it would be death for me to attempt flight, so here I am," and she broke into a wan smile which I saw in my dreams more times than one.

Five minutes later I was alone with the soughing of the tall trees in my ears. The shadows of the room had deepened perceptibly. An indefinable chill seemed to have taken possession of my whole body. Into what sort of habitation had I come?

I turned and looked out of the window. The landscape outside was not an inviting one. It was the fall of the year and the trees were beginning to shed their first leaves. Beyond them I caught sight of a low range of unprepossessing hills, and I fancied I saw at their base the bosom of a little river.

I shook off as best I could the feeling that involuntarily came over me. I resolved to send for my traps.

Glancing at my reflection in the mirror over the marble-topped dresser, I descended to the lower floor and made my way to the room where I had encountered my new employer. I opened the door softly and stepped inside.

Rostan Gosnold still occupied the chair, but not in the same position which I had left him. His head had fallen upon his bosom and I perceived that he slept.

It was not my intention to disturb him, and I was about to withdraw when a footstep behind me caused me to turn quickly.

I came face to face with a man of thirty tall and handsome, who bowed stiffly as he saw me and then quickly straightened.

"I am Doctor Dunlape," said he rather curtly. "I am Mr. Gosnold's physician."

"I am Miss Reynolds, now in Mr. Gosnold's employ as nurse," I answered, echoing his curtness.

"Eh? Really I did not know you had been summoned to the place."

"I have but just arrived," I continued. "My baggage has not yet come."

As I could see there was a puzzled look in his dark eyes, eyes I was to see flash before many days had passed.

"I am installed in the house," he suddenly went on. "I trust we shall get along together, Miss Reynolds."

With this he bowed and was gone. For a moment I remained just within the room, looking at my charge. When I turned away I happened to glance up the staircase. Halfway up the steps I beheld the immobile figure of Doctor Dunlape.

CHAPTER II.

A TERRIBLE DISCOVERY.

What was he doing on the stair? Was he watching me? For a moment I thought of resenting his apparent espionage, but thinking better of it, I passed out of the house to the open air in hopes of finding some one whom I could send for my baggage which I had left at the depot. A man whom I afterward knew as Brooks came in sight and this errand was soon accomplished.

During the next four days I came to know all the people in the house, and a strange mess it was. There was, to be sure, Doctor Forbes Dunlape, Miss Annabelle, Mr. Gosnold's niece, and a woman named Teresa Hope. Miss Annabelle was a beautiful little thing of seventeen, as sweet as she was good, and one of those girls who keep no secret from you, but whom you come to love from the first meeting. I took to her from the very first, for there was something about her which secured by affection and the dread days near at hand bound me to her as with hooks of steel.

Teresa Hope I could not like. It may have been one woman's aversion for another, but I found her repellent because she was cold and seemed to be on the list of Doctor Dunlape's favorites. In addition to these people there was Brooks, the man of all work, and Flavia, the maid.

Rostan Gosnold was a strange man. He never went out of the house. When he left his chair in the library it was to seek his bedchamber from which he emerged in the morning to take that same chair in which he seldom stirred. He walked poorly, as though he were a paralytic, but his arms were strong and the grasp of his hand firm and hearty.

I found that I was to watch over him during the day, while he remained in Doctor Dunlape's charge the rest of the time. Therefore, after my daily vigils, I would have much time to myself.

When I left my charge on the fifth day of my sojourn at Shadow Farm I went up to my chamber. I had lingered a little longer than common in the library, for Mr. Gosnold had been more communicative than usual.

The shadows of the dusk had come again and I reached my door unmolested. As I opened it I was startled by a slight cry and the next moment I was staring at Flavia Jayne lying across the foot of my bed.

The suddenness of this discovery took my breath. I hastened to the girl's side and asked her what the matter was. She only looked, but did not speak, and I saw that her face did not have a vestige of color. It was some time before the maid was half herself.

"I'm sorry you ever came to this house!" cried she hysterically. "It is the most dreadful place on earth. You've seen nothing as yet. If you remain you will see things that will send your blood as cold as ice through your veins."

"What have you seen?" cried I. "What is so dreadful about this house?"

"I dare not tell you," and the girl shuddered.

"Then I shall find out for myself," said I with spirit. "I am not to be driven away by the fear of anything, no matter what it may be.

She was sitting up now and I gave her one more look and went to the window. When I looked around again the girl was gone. I had not heard her leave the room.

It was now Doctor Dunlape's watch and I was not expected even to look into the library.

I felt that a stroll would do my nerves good, and putting on my hat, I stole forth, intending to take a walk through the grounds about the old house.

There was a back staircase and I took it. In a few moments I was beyond the house with the cool winds in my face. The night was a delightful one. A few frosted leaves filtered down through the tinted foliage of the great trees and dporred noiselessly at my feet. A hare leaped away from beside the path and disappeared among the denser shrubbery.

During one of my previous rambles I had discovered a little summer house which invited repose, and I now bent my steps towards it. It was not much of a structure, for the paint had worn off, of its slats and there were sparrow nests in the dome. I entered the summer house and sat down on the bench. A singular stillness surrounded me.

All at once I heard a hum of voices and the next moment I was on my feet—for the sounds told me that the speakers were actually approaching my retreat. What should I do? There was no way of escaping them, if they intended to take possession of the summer house. I was in a dilemma.

The voices were indistinct, a mere chatter with no intelligible formation, and I was hoping I should not be discovered.

Presently the mystery was broken to a certain extent, for I recognized Doctor Dunlape's voice.

"I shall not be gone long," he was saying. "I leave everything in your charge. There is to be no interference, remember."

"I shall see there is none," was the reply.

"The girl is getting more tractable. She isn't going to be hard to manage."

"I could manage her myself," with spirit. "You know me, Forbes?"

"Of course I do," with a little laugh that made me shudder in the gloom of my surroundings. "There's no misunderstanding between us, I'm sure."

The speakers were still approaching the summer house and I was racking my brain over half a dozen wild propositions.

"Do you think he is holding his own?" I heard the woman say.

"Yes and no."

"I think he is losing ground. How in the world did he come to think of the one who came the other day?"

As the last words were undoubtedly a reference to me I bent eagerly forward, holding my breath and clenching my hands in a delirium of suspense.

"That mystifies me," answered Doctor Dunlape. "I beat about the bush in that direction today, but got no satisfaction out of him. He shut up like a clam the moment I broached the subject."

"It is all strange to me," the woman said. "I don't like her presence here."

She spoke so bitterly that I felt like rushing out and telling her that between her and myself no love would ever be lost, for by this time I had made up my mind that she was Teresa Hope.

"I'll keep watch and ward," she went on in a moment. "But while you are away I wish you would look into the woman's antecedents."

"There's no necessity for doing that," laughed Doctor Dunlape. "She's the daughter of old Reynolds, the toxicologist, the expert on poisons."

"Heavens! Then——"

"Don't go off in a tangent now," interrupted the good-looking doctor. "That's nothing to be afraid of. The old man kept his secrets, and when he died his daughter had to do something to keep the wolf from the door. I've a notion that some time or other Rostan Gosnold and the dead chemist were acquainted, which would account for her coming to Shadow Farm."

By this time the two began to move away much to my relief and in a few moments their voices were lost to me. I dared not quit the bower for some time. They might be somewhere in the grounds and I cared not to fall under their inquisitive eyes.

When at last I did stir from my retreat I made my way in a cautious manner to the house. There was a dim light in Miss Annabelle's chamber and I resolved to make my way thither and bid the sweet girl good night as was my custom.

I entered the house as quietly as possible. There was no need of a latch-key for the doors were not locked. I passed to Annabelle's room and found her asleep on her chair preparatory to retiring. A book lay in her lap and as I looked down upon the fragile creature I thought her the loveliest girl I had ever seen. It seemed sacrilege to disturb her; so, taking her hand, I gently kissed it and went away.

What had become of Doctor Dunlape and Teresa Hope I did not know.

IN SEPARATE WAYS

We walked in separate ways;
And dreamed not, in those days,
How clearly, thought to thought,
Our hearts were beating, each with each,
As through deep wood, by barren beach,
The Heights of Life we sought.
We heard no voice, no spirit-call,
No thread of leading cast its thrall
Until those ways led to that trysting place
Where we were brought together, face to face;
Then soul read soul, heart leaped to heart,
And paths could be no more apart.

Perhaps they were still in the grove. With the discovery I had made whilst in the summer house fresh in my mind, instead of passing direct to my room I went slowly down the stairs and opened the door of the library. Of course I expected to see it deserted, for I knew it was past the master's bed hour, but I opened it just the same.

The shaded lamp on the table in the center of the room imparted a warm glow to the place. The light fell softly over the table. Rostan Gosnold's chair was untenanted, but the slippers which he usually wore rested on the carpet at the foot of the chair.

I was about to withdraw, after a glance, when I noticed a goblet which stood on the table. It might have contained the night potion which possibly would mean nothing at all, but the sight of it singularly attracted me.

With a hurried and fearsome glance around the room, I advanced across the carpet and approached the table. The light of the lamp fell upon this little chalice.

I noticed that in the bottom of the glass were some almost indistinguishable lees. They were nearly colorless.

Obsessed with an impulse which I could not shake off, my hand moved forward and picked up the glass. I bent toward it as I held it under the lamp.

In another second I thought that my head would whirl me from the room. The glass fell from my hand and rolled towards the edge of the table, but, brought back to my senses by the consequences of its shattering on the floor, I prevented a catastrophe.

I gasped as I fled from the library; I know my face was white.

My father had not shared his secrets with me in vain. I knew what that glass had contained and there were few civilized people who did know.

CHAPTER III.

MORE ADVENTURES.

The faint odor which rose from the tiny glass had told the story.

When I found myself at the head of the staircase I wondered if I had replace the glass exactly where I had found it. If not would not my interference be discovered? Once I thought of slipping back to the library and investigating, but certain fears restrained me. I went to my room and locked the door.

Of course there would be little sleep for my eyes that night. My startling discovery had arranged for the absence of slumber and I began a long vigil at the window which looked out through the darkened grove towards the river beyond.

Whither had Doctor Dunlape gone? He had placed Teresa Hope on guard during his absence and she was not to be interfered with. Did his instructions cover me?

Whilst I stood at the window, hearing nothing but the lone call of the outside wind a singular episode in my past life rose before me.

It happened when my father first began to impart to me some of the wonderful knowledge of poisons which he had mastered by his wonderful research.

One day he was closeted for hours with an old man who had the look of a sailor. I paid but little attention to him, though the door of the laboratory was open and I could see everything. I knew that my father was strangely interested in what the old man was saying, but more especially in a little bottle which the sailor had taken from his budget.

For some time after the visitor's departure my father remained silent, then I heard his voice calling me. When I went to him he was holding the little bottle between him and a strong light.

"This," cried he "is something the Borgias should have had."

"What is it, father?" my curiosity prompted me to ask.

"It is nobi."

The word sounded so strangely on my ears that I remember that I laughed.

He told me that the old sailor, who had been to all the wild lands of the world, had stolen it from some natives. It was worth its weight in diamonds.

"What will it do?" I queried.

"It will kill and that is what makes it so dangerous. It kills and leaves no trace on the victim. The victim of nobi goes down by inches. It saps his vitality till at last he dies, his mind first floating back to the days of his youth, and then goes out with the gentleness of flickering candle.

I remembered that I looked at the bottle as long as he held it up for my inspection. It looked so innocent of itself that I was constrained to consider its contents harmless despite the great learning my father possessed.

Years afterward he showed me in the laboratory that same bottle and another not unlike it. After years of research he told me that he had discovered an antidote for the terrible poison of the Ceylonese. It had cost him months of labor. The horrible death agent which was supposed to have no antidote had been conquered at last. I saw him put away the two phials and from that time on he had never referred to them again.

The subtle aroma of nobi had never left me in all those years. There was nothing like it in all the world. An almost colorless heavy product, placed in wine or other liquid, it had the power of sapping life with the certainty of the poisons of the Borgias and the Brinvilliars.

These recollections swarmed over me that night as I stood at the window of my room in the House of Fear and looked out over the blotted landscape.

Who had placed nobi in Rostan Gosnold's glass?

The dread puzzle deepened. It grew on me till I felt it tugging at my heartstrings, tearing them apart and filling me with indefinite agony and dread.

What was the purpose of the poisoner? I thought of the sweet girl on the same floor sleeping the sleep of innocence. She was Gosnold's heir, the only blood relation he was supposed to have. Who was plotting against Annabelle?

I drew back at last and wen to my door. I unlocked it softly and listened. The house was still. I tiptoed to the head of the staircase and looked down into the gloom that rested phantomlike at its foot. I saw no one.

Summoning all my courage, I glided down the stair and slipped into the library. Though it was darkened I knew the position of the table and thither I groped, my heart in my throat, but my powers at full play.

Presently I felt the contact of the table and ran my hand gently over it.

The little glass was gone!

For a moment I stood amid that almost palpable darkness and heard the pulsations of my own heart.

Who had been there and taken away the evidence of terrible death?

I thought that perhaps the glass had fallen from the table and crashed on the carpet. I knelt down and investigated. Not a vestige of it rewarded my search.

I was about to rise when my ears caught the frou frou of skirts.

I crouched against the table leg and held my breath. The sound came to the door which I had left ajar.

Some one was listening there. I tried to penetrate the gloom with my eyes, but all in vain. Each fleeting moment seemed a whole lifetime.

I pressed my hands against my bosom to still the pit-a-pat of my fluttering heart, fearing that the listening ears might catch the crazy dance it made and I fancied that I had been successful.

At last the noise was resumed, but it receded. I was not to be disturbed.

I waited in that room till I was quite sure that it would not come back, then I went to the door and looked into the lightless hall.

The loneliness and danger of my position weighed heavily upon me.

At last up the stairs I went, step by step, stopping on each one and listening like a guilty soul.

On the floor above I glanced ahead and saw an arrow of light underneath Teresa Hope's door. Had she been the person who had come to the library portal on hunt of me?

Fortunately I did not have to pass that door on the way to my own and this lent me courage. I knew that Annabelle slept without locking herself in, for she had told me that this was her custom, in case her uncle needed her in the night.

Down the corridor I went till I came abreast of the girl's chamber. I turned the knob softly and entered.

All at once the deep breathing of one in dreamless slumber fell upon my trained ears. I approached the bed across which lay an autumn moonbeam, for the full orb of night was high in the heavens and her light had come to Annabelle like the benediction of heaven.

In another moment I was stooping over the form on the couch, looking down into the innocent face. It was with difficulty I could keep my lips from her alabaster forehead, but I did not want to break the girl's slumbers.

As I turned away my arm came in contact with a little stand at the side of the bed. I looked and beheld upon it a tumbled filled with water. Annabelle had placed it within reach so that she might drink during the night if she awoke.

I don't know what strange impulse caused me to bend over the tumbler, but in a minute I was there. A wild cry leaped to my lips, but I suppressed it.

There was the same odor, the sign of the nobi, the death agent of the faraway island in the heart of the summer seas.

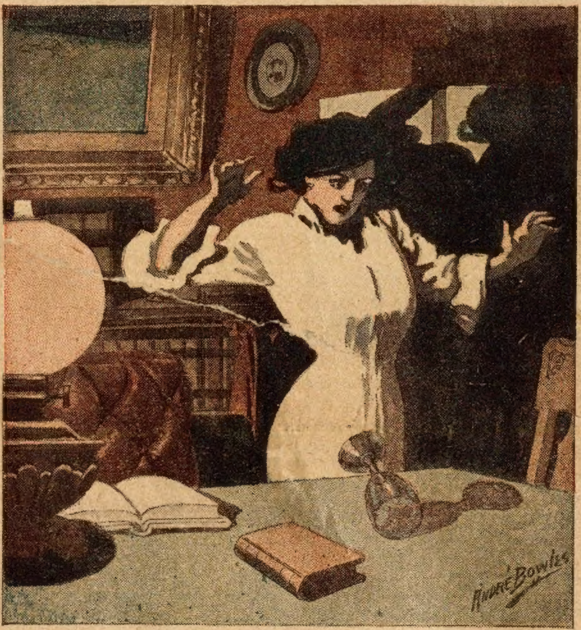
For a full minute I stood erect beside the sleeping child with my powers paralyzed. My brain whirled. I felt that I should drop at the foot of the bed and not only arouse the sleeper, but the whole house as well.

When I recovered my self-possession, I reached out and seized the glass and dashed its contents as far into the heart of the night as I could. Then I filled the tumbler with fresh water from the pitcher hard by and glided from the boudoir.

The darkest villainy was afoot in the House of Fear.

Not until I had closed my own door behind did I seem to breathe again.

I was disrobing for the night when I caught the sound of hurried footsteps beyond my door, and the next moment it was thrown open and Flavia flung herself forward. She would have fallen against me if I had not drawn back, but the next moment I caught her in my arms and threw one hand over her mouth.



The chalice dropped from her hand.

"Silence!" I cried at her ear. "On your life, girl, not a sound, not a word."

She looked at me out of her distended eyes and remained silent.

"What have you seen?" I queried. "What has frightened you?"

"Did you see it, too?" stammered Flavia with a tremor that shook her from head to foot.

"I have seen nothing," said I. "What have you seen?"

"The woman in white," she answered with her pallid lip at my ear. "I have seen it before. The White Lady of Shadow Farm!"

I was not inclined to laugh at the girl's fears, though I am no believer in the supernatural.

"I was up," resumed Flavia, and at the window. She came across the lawn outside and entered the house. I saw her on the stairs afterward, for I could not beat down my curiosity. I am going away, Miss Alice. I shall leave this accursed house. It is death, worse than that, to remain!" and I looked down into her face again to discover that I held an unconscious form in my arms.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TERROR GROWS.

The next morning I informed Rostan Gosnold that some important private business called me to the city where I had spent my life. He demurred a little, saying that he was becoming accustomed to me, that he liked my ways, but if I insisted that my business was imperative, he would have to let me go.

I went upstairs and kissed Annabelle, who, of course, knew nothing of what I had seen and then told Flavia that I would not remain away long but would be back by nightfall.

"Are you going away, Miss Reynolds?" asked Teresa Hope whom I encountered in the hallway as I was about to make my way to the little station to take the train.

"Not for long," I answered, cheerily. "Have you any errand I might serve you?"

"None," she said brusquely and the next moment I was on my way.

I did have business in the city, and as I thought of it my heart leaped up with a thousand fears and I felt my blood tingle in every vein.

My father's house which had fallen to me had other tenants, but I had locked the laboratory with its strange and somewhat dangerous contents with an admonition that no one should attempt to pass the threshold.

Reaching the teeming metropolis I went straight from the surface car to the old home.

"Everything's just as you left it," said the tenant cheerily as she greeted me. "I hope you have a good place, miss."

"An excellent place," I lied with the assurance of an accomplished prevaricator, and then made my way to the upper floor which I knew so well.

I opened the door of the little laboratory and then drew back the curtains, so as to admit all the light possible.

The old life came back to me, full of memories of my father, and I saw him again among his strange things, whilst I, a little girl, seemed to sit on the stool at the bench, watching him delve into the intricacies of science and draw therefrom the secrets which had astonished a world.

Going over to a little locked cupboard in one corner I took a tiny key from my pocket and tremblingly inserted it into the lock. The little varnished door squeaked on its hinges in greeting, for it had not been opened since the hand of the master had lost its cunning.

I discarded the various phials that greeted me in odd-looking rows, and thrust my hand into the farthest corner of the topmost shelf. It was to put my hand there that I had come from Shadow Farm.

My eager fingers found a small bottle which I jerked into the light. A little cry burst from my throat.

It was not the bottle I remembered so well, seeing it for the first time on the occasion of the visit of the old sailor. I placed it on a table and groped over the shelf once more.

"It must be here!" I cried aloud. "Who can have taken it?"

But it was not there. The dread poison of nobi had disappeared.

Again I returned to the attack of the cupboard. Phial after phial I removed, but it was not among them.

I knew that my father had marked his poisons with certain cabalistic signs which he had undertaken to teach me to understand. As I turned from my task my eyes fell upon the first phial I had taken from the shelf. Catching it up I hastened to the window and held it breathlessly in the light.

My heart gave a great bound in my bosom, for a glance told me that it was the companion phial of the deadly product of the tropical forest. Hiding it in my bosom I replaced the other phials and turned away.

At the foot of the stairs I encountered the new tenant.

"I hope you found everything in good shape, miss?" she said.

"As I left them," I replied. "You have had no visitors?"

"If you mean burglars, miss, we've had none. Josis said she heard sounds upstairs one night, but Josis is a queer child and subject to imaginings."

"When did the child think she heard the sounds?"

"About a week after we came here. You know we moved in before you went away?"

I asked no more questions but went out into the street.

Several minutes later I entered a car not far from the old home and had barely seated myself when I glanced across the aisle straight into the face of Doctor Dunlape. He gave me a stiff bow of recognition and then a supercilious smile curled his thin lips.

"This is rather an unexpected encounter, Miss Reynolds," he remarked, eyeing me like a falcon.

"Doubtless, doctor," I returned. "I came down to the city after something I had forgotten," and without more ado turned my face away.

I left the car as soon as possible and went back to Shadow Farm.

Rostan Gosnold received me with a smile and I hastened to my own room where I placed the recovered phial under lock and key.

All that day I remained with my charge. He seemed to be in better spirits than usual, and I read to him all the afternoon.

With the return of night came Forbes Dunlape, who hastened to inquire after his patient. As he met my gaze, for I was still entertaining Rostan Gosnold, his gaze suddenly fell.

"Oh, Miss Alice, I haven't seen her since last night," cried Flavia as she caught sight of me. "I shall not go away, but shall remain as long as you stay."

I put my arms around the maid's waist and we walked down the upper corridor together.

"You must not go, Flavia, dear," said I, in a whisper. "I may need you here."

"If you need me, Miss Alice, I will stay," she answered with determination and we parted at her door.

Never before had I been in such a state of mind. I felt that I was in the midst of a strange and terrible drama which was being enacted under my very nose. The house was full of shadows and fears and when I beheld the darkness of another night settling down over the place I imagined that something new in the play was about to take place.

Teresa Hope looked into [illegible] depths of my soul when she encountered me after my return from the city. Already I felt there was an impassible barrier between us, that we were enemies, the one against the other, no matter what sort of moves were made, and I resolved that I would circumvent her in everything she did.

I saw the lights in the library darkened and then shut off altogether. Rostan Gosnold had gone to his room and I would not encounter him till the following day.

Midnight came with rain beating against my window. I had heard the first splashes and succeeding ones had kept me awake.

I fell to wondering if the chalice on Rostan Gosnold's table contained more of the deadly lees which I had discovered the previous night. Had the poisoner been again at work?

As I had not disrobed, for sleep was impossible, I descended to the lower floor and entered the library. My groping hand sought the table. It was sweeping it gently in search of the goblet when I heard a sound at the door and with a suppressed cry I drew back and trembled.

Some one had come into the room with the step of a fairy. I could see nothing. Only I heard the soft breathing of the person in the dense gloom. I crept back to the wall and drew around me the folds of the heavy curtain that hung before the bookcase. Peering out I caught the flash of a noiseless lucifer. By the light of the match I saw a hand steal towards the lamp, and as the flame touched the wick I almost uttered a startling cry.

It was not Doctor Dunlape, nor Teresa Hope whom I saw with distended eyes, but Annabelle!

The sweet child of seventeen looked lovelier than ever in her lingerie of white. She stood at the table with one hand buried in her bosom and the other drawing towards her her uncle's glass which stood on the table.

If I breathed I was not aware of it.

All at once the hidden hand of the young girl came forth and I saw that it clutched a phial of a darkish color but my watchful eyes saw more than this. The girl was a somnambulist.

Her eyes seemed to see, yet she saw not; her movements were like one fully awake; one half of her strange nature was working, the other slept.

(Continued on page seventeen.)

FROM TEXAS

Some Coffee Facts From the Lone Star State.

From a beautiful farm down in Texas, where gushing springs unite to form babbling brooks that wind their sparkling way through flowery meads, comes a note of gratitude for delivery from the coffee habit.

"When my baby boy came to me five years ago, I began to drink Postum, having a feeling that it would be better for him and me than the old kind of drug-laden coffee. I was not disappointed in it, for it enabled me, a small delicate woman, to nurse a bouncing, healthy baby 14 months.

"I have since continued the use of Postum for I have grown fond of it, and have discovered to my joy that it has entirely relieved me of a bilious habit which used to prostrate me two or three times a year, causing much discomfort to my family and suffering to myself.

"My brother-in-law was cured of chronic constipation by leaving off coffee and using Postum. He has become even more fond of it than he was of the old coffee.

"In fact the entire family, from the latest arrival, (a 2-year-old who always calls for his 'potie' first thing in the morning) up to the head of the house, think there is no drink so good or so wholesome as Postum." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

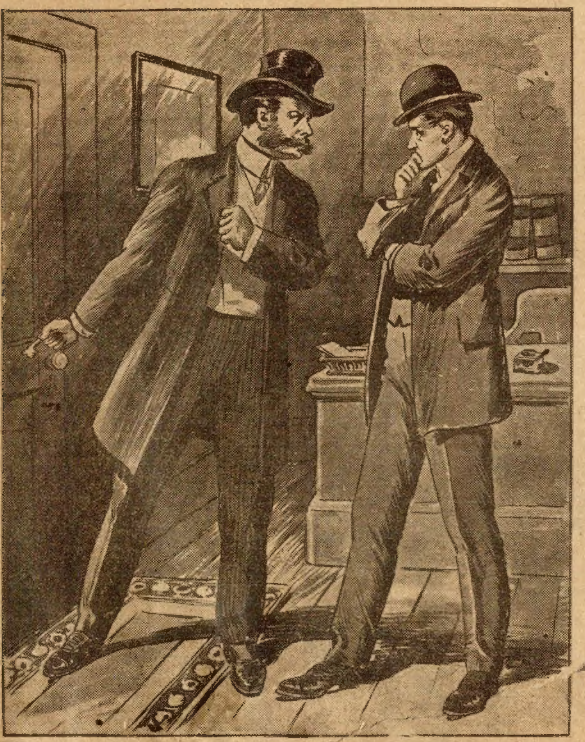
Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

The Mysterious Detective;

Or, How Keeneyes Hid Himself

By J. BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS



"I mean to know what is in your mind"

[Copyright 1911 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

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CHAPTER XIII.

DEFIANCE.

WHEN Keeneyes parted from Mrs. Williams, just before midnight, he had no definite end in view. He felt too wakeful to return to the hotel, and as the streets were so dark, it seemed to him a good time to enjoy his liberty. He could wander at will unobserved by the prying inhabitants of Cobbville.

It was mere chance that took him to the mouth of the alley which he had visited after his arrival in town. He did not intend to enter this alley, and he was passing it carelessly by, when his attention was attracted by a light about half way down the narrow causeway.

He stopped and looked more attentively.

The light was shed by a lantern which had been placed upon the cobblestones near the center of the alley.

By this light, three men were to be observed, not very distinctly, yet distinctly enough for the detective to recognize them.

They were Mr. Williams, Weevely the real-estate agent, and Caldwell. It was strange indeed that these three men, so unlike, should have been brought together in such an unlikely place and at such an unusual hour.

The rich banker, the enterprising real-estate agent, and the young man who had built a house for speculation—there they stood in secret conference.

One of them—it was Weevely—held a spade; and after whispering together, Keeneyes saw them go to a certain spot, and then Weevely inserted the blade of the spade in the earth.

"Don't dig deep," whispered Caldwell.

Keeneyes thought to himself, "Aha! I must join this group."

Accordingly the detective went down the alley without any attempt to conceal his approach.

At his first steps upon the stones, Weevely dropped his spade, and Williams, the banker, cried out in startled alarm. Caldwell drew his revolver, and pointed it at Keeneyes, whom the lantern-light offered as an easy mark.

"It is you!" cried Williams and Weevely in a breath; the first was fiercely threatening, the real-estate agent was maliciously triumphant.

"I think so," said Keeneyes easily, as he came nearer.

"You have him, Caldwell!" said Williams with satisfaction.

"Yes," said the young man, covering Keeneyes with his weapon. "Stand where you are, Mr. Zellers, if you please."

"Since that is conditional," said Keeneyes, "and since I don't please, I shall pay no sort of attention to you, unless you explain this very characteristic behavior."

"Characteristic?" muttered Caldwell.

"Yes," Keeneyes agreeably explained, "it is so rash, you know. You can't be pointing a pistol at me all your life, your arm will grow tired, your eyes will finally falter. And of course, after you cease pointing at me, the situation will be changed. You should have thought of this before. The only way to prevent me from getting a chance at you, would be to kill me, and that would be rather expensive."

"At least," said Caldwell coolly, "my arm and eye will hold out long enough to answer certain questions."

"I don't like a pistol to be pointed at me, and I may as well say so now," Keeneyes objected. "Please take it away."

Weevely drew a pistol of his own, which he pointed at Keeneyes. "You are in our power," cried Weevely, "so there's no use to resist. You answer our questions!"

"You ask 'em, then," cried the detective impatiently. "But I hate to be pointed at by men who are so little used to firearms. I feel that you may get nervous, and act foolishly. Children, you know, are the most dangerous users of such weapons."

"You answer what we want to know," spoke up Williams, "or we'll get pretty nervous, and we'll act pretty foolishly, perhaps."

"And to think," said Keeneyes, in real anger, "that I might have watched you men without betraying myself! I had no idea you were so primitive. We never use pistols any more, in scenes like this, back where I came from. Let us have the questions as soon as possible, for this is intolerable. Are those triggers automatic?"

"You'll think 'em pneumatic," chuckled Weevely, "if you hear something blow up."

"I'll put the question for all of us," said Williams: "Why did you come to Cobbville?"

"To rest," said Keeneyes; "to enjoy the fresh Ozak air; to recuperate from long mental strain; to avoid society; to run wild for a few weeks; to live to myself; to escape being questioned."

"Mr. Zellers," said Caldwell, "for reasons best known to ourselves, we cannot be trifled with on this point. It is absolutely necessary for us to know why you are here. And if you value your life, it is necessary for you to tell us; and to tell us quickly."

"I have told you," said Keeneyes.

"Tell us again," snarled Weeveley.

"Mr. Zellers," said Williams, "it is no use for you to attempt to deceive us. We must know why you are in town."

"Mr. Zellers," said Caldwell, "I am not very patient, tonight, and you are quite right in mistrusting my pistol. I must admit that I am nervous; and your foolish attempt to put us off, increases my nervousness. Why did you ever come to this town?"

"Mr. Zellers," said Weevely, flourishing his pistol, "I am a pretty good shot, or at least used to be in my day. Why are you in Cobbville? What did you come here for? Who are you watching? What do you want to know? And how long do you expect to stay?"

"I am here," said Keeneyes, simply for my health."

"You won't find it here," Williams interposed. "But don't shoot him, boys—at least, wait just one moment; he won't tell why he's here. Then we must exact his promise to leave Cobbville at once, never to return. Give us that promise, Mr. Zellers, and we'll let you off."

"Gentlemen," said Keeneyes, "if you will lower these weapons, I will talk to you. If I try to escape, then shoot away. But there's no use pointing death at me, when I am as peaceable as a lamb."

"That's true," said Caldwell, lowering his pistol. "Put down your hand Weevely, and if he tries to run, blaze away as much as you please."

"I enjoy aiming at him," Weevely explained.

"Yes, I know," said Keeneyes, soothingly, "but we can't have everything we enjoy. And you can't have my story as long as I'm afraid you'll press that trigger a little harder than you intend. I know you wouldn't shoot me on purpose; you are too big a coward; but I am more afraid of cowards than of brave men—like Mr. Caldwell."

"You'll find out if I'm a coward," said Weevely. At the same time, he sullenly lowered his weapon.

The detective breathed more freely. "Gentlemen," he said, "as soon as I reached town, I came to this alley to the spot just about where you are standing. I drew a knife from my pocket, and over there where you see yonder small stone, I dug a hole in the ground——"

"Yes, yes," Williams hastily interposed, "and dug something up and put it in an old envelope. Weevely saw you; he was watching. It is useless to deny anything."

"In that case, I shall deny nothing," said Keeneyes. "Yes, I dug something up, then covered the hole with the flat stone, and went away; or rather, I first went away, then came back and covered the hole——"

"Yes," Weevely interposed, "you looked down at the hole and said, 'Ah, there it is'."

"Precisely—and you were spying upon me, eh, Weevely?"

"Call it what you please," said Weevely doggedly.

"I call it spying," said Keeneyes, "and that pleases me very well. Let me continue."

"We can continue, instead," interposed Williams. "At the supper table in the hotel, you took a letter from your pocket, or an envelope, rather, and poured something into a glass of water, and after it was dissolved, you called for an empty bottle. You poured the stuff you'd mixed up into the bottle, and carried it away."

"It was murky," said Keeneyes, reminiscently.

"Yes," Weevely agreed, "it looked like muddy water."

"That's what it was," said Keeneyes.

"Some time after that," said Caldwell, "I saw you in front of my house, out in the road; you poured the stuff out of your bottle, into an envelope, and it leaked through the envelope."

"You might have known," remarked the detective, "that you couldn't hold a bottle-full of muddy water, in an envelope."

"Then," continued young Caldwell, you wrote something on a leaf of paper, and put it into that bottle; and after that, you went driving with Mrs. Williams."

"I didn't want to go," said Keeneyes;

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* * *

They'd Come in Handy.

Senator Elihu Root was talking about a tactless political move.

"It lost them the election," he said, "and it deserved to on account of its tactlessensss.

"In fact, in this regard, it reminded me of the rich man who, in a wedding-breakfast speech, where the bride and bridegroom would be very poor, concluded with the words:

"And now, dear friends, one last remark, one last remark. Don't throw any rice or old shoes at them. Send all your rice and old shoes to them after they get settled."

* * *

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* * *

What He Represented.

Mayor Gaynor, at a dinner in New York, was discussing a divorce commission that had been appointed in a neighboring State.

"But, sir," said a reformer, "I note a bachelor on this commission. What is the good of a bachelor on a divorce commission?"

"Oh," said Mayor Gaynor, smiling, "he represents the co-respondents."

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* * *

New Use For the Shoehorn.

Bathhouse partitions are not sound proof, and consequently a sweet female voice full of dismay was plainly heard at Atlantic City on a Sunday afternoon.

"Oh, Laura," cried the voice, evidently addressing her girl chum in the adjoining house. "I have forgotten my shoehorn! Have you one that you can loan me?"

"What's the matter," queried a deep bass voice a few yards away before Laura could reply, "can't you get your hobble skirt on?"

J. P.

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* * *

Counting the Buttons.

"What are you mumbling about, John?" asked the wife, as her husband was buttoning up her dress in the back.

"Oh, I'm just reciting that 'Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief' business," replied the man.

"And aren't you nearly through?"

"No, not half through. I've only finished off the third thief."

(Continued from page four.)

"she insisted. She was like you, and wanted to know why I came to town."

"Now, Mr. Zellers," said Williams, "explain what we have seen. What did you dig up from yonder spot?"

"A lump of dirt," was the answer.

CHAPTER XIV.

FOUR SECRETS.

The answer of Keeneyes irritated Caldwell, it angered Williams and it made Weevely furious.

Weevely again lifted his pistol, to aim it at the detective, as he said, "We mean to have the truth, and nothing but the truth."

"That is fortunate," said Keeneyes, "since I have nothing else to give you."

"Let me conduct the questioning," interposed young Caldwell; "Weevely, put down your weapon."

The real-estate agent obeyed grumblingly.

"Now, Mr. Zellers," Caldwell addressed the detective, "what did you dig up from the middle of this alley?"

"A lump of dirt."

"What was it that you concealed so carefully in an envelope, at this spot?"

"That same lump of dirt."

"In the hotel diningroom, what was it that you dissolved in a glass, and afterwards poured into an empty bottle?"

"That same lump of dirt."

"When I was watching you from my place, what was it that you poured into an envelope, and allowed to trickle at your feet?"

"It was that same lump of dirt, in liquid form."

"And what did you write on a sheet of paper, which you afterwards rolled up carefully, and stuck into the bottle?"

"Gentlemen, that bottle is in my pocket, and that sheet of paper is in the bottle."

"Don't undertake to hand it to us," interposed Weevely, hastily. "I am up to your game! You keep your hands crossed, or I'll blow out your brains."

"I, at least, have some, to be dynamited," remarked Keeneyes.

"Now, Mr. Zellers," said Caldwell, "tell us why you went through these extraordinary maneuvers, these absurd performances, all because of a lump of dirt, if, as you say, it was only a lump of dirt. Why did you dig it up, then melt it in water, then throw the water away."

"Shall I answer that question?"

"Shall you!" echoed Weevely. "Hah! You'd better answer it, let me tell you!"

"And does Mr. Williams also insist upon my answering it?" persisted the detective.

The banker gave an angry snort. "I demand it!" he cried.

"Very well," said the detective. "Now, gentlemen, do not be angry with me, if the answer displeases you. Do not blame me for indiscretion, since I am forced to affirm something that vitally affects the secret lives of all three of you."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Caldwell, uneasily.

"I mean," said the detective sternly, "that in order to tell you why I acted as I did, why I dug up that lump of dirt, dissolved it, cast it away, I must tell of a secret which I have dug out of the past life of Mr. Williams; which is dissolving the life-prospects and soul-happiness of our friend Weevely; and which is casting away the ambitions and the hopes of you, my dear Mr. Caldwell."

"You are trying to avoid our question by seeking to mystify us," said the banker savagely.

"On the contrary," was the retort, "I mean to speak very plainly, at least, if you force me to the issue."

"Concerning our lives?" asked Caldwell, with hesitation.

"Precisely."

"But what has your lump of dirt to do with our lives?"

"It is merely symbolical."

"Come, come!" interposed Williams. "Begin here on Weevely."

"Yes," said Caldwell, "what has the lump of dirt to do with Weevely."

"You needn't mind about me," interjected Weevely, "unless you round up the three of us."

"Mr. Weevely," said Keeneyes, "you are just; and I shall not say one word regarding your crime, unless I bring in the other two, in a frank revelation."

"My crime!" echoed Weevely. "This is too much, I tell you."

"Why do you not ask, 'What crime?'" retorted Keeneyes.

Weevely was silent.

"I will at least ask you this," interposed Williams; "what is the secret in my past life connected with?"

"Diamonds," said Keeneyes; and Mr. Caldwell——"

"Never mind about me," Caldwell interposed. "I don't care anything about your lump of dirt. It doesn't interest me." He turned to the others and said, "Gentlemen, shall we adjourn? I rather think Mr. Zellers has the best of us."

"It is now I who object to an adjournment," remarked Keeneyes. "Or rather, I must make it conditional."

"What!" blustered the banker. "Do you imagine you can prevent us from going away?"

"Well, I am rather imaginative when I deal with imaginative natures," said Keeneyes.

"What are your conditions, Mr. Zellers?" Caldwell asked, in a conciliatory one.

"That each of you will grant me a private interview."

"When?"

"Let me see," said Keeneyes; "in the morning I have an engagement with Mrs. Williams, at ten——"

"With my wife?" gasped the banker.

"Precisely; she is your wife. And in order to kill two birds with one stone, suppose you are with her, when I interview her?"

"No, no, no," cried the banker, rapidly. "Interview me first, I beg of you. Give me tomorrow at nine—say from nine to ten."

"And let me talk to you from eight to nine," said Weevely hastily. "I'd like to have a word with you before you close with Mr. Williams."

"I want to make myself clear to you, Mr. Zellers," said Caldwell, "and I'd like to find you unprejudiced. Will you see me in the morning at seven?"

"Hum!" said Keeneyes; "you give me a very full budget! Well, so be it. Mr. Caldwell, I will come to your house at seven in the morning; and to your office, Weevely, at eight; and to your bank, Mr. Williams, at nine; and Mrs. Williams is to take me driving at ten. Until then, good night."

And the detective walked leisurely away, leaving the three men standing motionless beside the dim lantern, looking uneasily into one another's faces.

CHAPTER XV.

THE NEXT MORNING.

The next morning, precisely six seconds to seven o'clock, Keeneyes appeared at the front gate of the Caldwell mansion, looked searchingly about the yard, studied the house with an interested air, and noted that the front door stood open.

At exactly seven o'clock, he rang the doorbell.

Young Caldwell had evidently been awaiting him.

The bell had hardly sounded before the handsome young owner of the new mansion appeared in the hall.

"You are punctual," said Caldwell.

"I am Keeneyes," answered the other, as if that explained his punctuality.

He followed Caldwell into the house. Caldwell led the way to the front room.

The room was uncarpeted, and scantily furnished. It did well enough for a bachelor who lived alone, and Keeneyes took the only chair without comment.

Caldwell sat upon a trunk, remarking, "Of course, when a fellow lives alone, he can get along with precious little furniture. I hope you will not feel uncomfortable."

"Of course not," was the answer, "since I have the chair."

Caldwell smiled, and said, "A fellow never learns how little he can do without until he lives alone."

"What fellow?" asked Keeneyes abruptly.

Caldwell looked at him. "I referred to myself," he explained.

"Oh," said the detective, rather oddly.

"Why do you speak in that way?" Caldwell asked, restlessly.

"Why, my dear sir," returned Keeneyes, "you do not live alone. So naturally I wondered what fellow you were talking about."

"You say I do not live alone? What do you mean?"

"I say you do not live alone. But what does it matter what I mean? My saying this, or that, doesn't make it true. Either you do live alone, or you do not. It's no matter what I say."

"Mr. Zellers——"

Mr. Caldwell, as you are aware, I have a very full morning before me; at eight I must call on Weevely; at nine, on Williams; at ten on Mrs. Williams. It devolves, therefore, and is expedient —" Keeneyes paused as if to enjoy his words.

Then he added, "It devolves upon you, and is expedient for us both, to transact our business as speedily as possible."

"What business?"

"That my dear sir, I am about to ask you, since it is you who requested this interview."

Caldwell hesitated.

Then he said: "The business may be introduced by your explaining what you mean when you charge that I do not live alone."

"Not at all, sir. I had not made that charge last night, when you asked for this meeting. What business did you have in mind, last night, when you requested me to come here at seven? Come, come, Mr. Caldwell, let us not lose sight of the fact that I am here because you wish it, and not because I seek it."

"Very well; that is true. You said last night, Mr. Zellers, that you were cognizant of some crime in my life. Please explain."

"Why should I? Who could know about it better than you?"

"I should like to know what you meant."

"In other words, you would like to be sure that I know about it?"

"Perhaps that is it, in frank words," Caldwell admitted.

"But why should I satisfy you? Why should I prove that I know what you would like kept hidden?"

"If I knew that you known it," said Caldwell, "I shall know how to be governed in the future, and how to conduct myself toward various parties—including yourself."

"Precisely your point, Mr. Caldwell. But you can see that it is not my point. For why should I care whether you know how to govern yourself toward others or not?"

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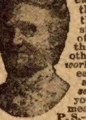

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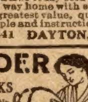

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Caldwell asked, "Could I make it worth your while, to care?"

Keeneyes reflected.

Then he said, "Have you much property besides this new building?"

"Very little."

"Then you can't pay me," said Keeneyes, rising as if to go.

"I am convinced," cried Caldwell, "that you will help me!"

"And why are you convinced of that?"

"Because, sir, I believe you have taken something of a liking to me, as I have to you. I believe you know I am in trouble, and I believe you would like to help me out."

"Oh," said Keeneyes; "it is merely a friendly alliance, then?"

"That is all I can offer."

The detective reseated himself. "Possibly I might agree to that," he said. "Very well, then, make full confession."

"But if you know anything about the secret," said Caldwell, eagerly, "you know that I am not at liberty to confess it."

"My dear young man, you are right, and I think maybe I may learn to like you, as you have said. Come, then I will tell you your own secret. And when you are convinced that I know it, your honor will no longer be involved, and we can discuss it in detail."

CHAPTER XVI.

CALDWELL'S SECRET.

Caldwell seemed more uneasy than ever, on hearing that Keeneyes intended to tell him the secret which Caldwell had so jealously concealed.

Keeneyes began abruptly: "You have told me of your attachment to Miss Sallie Williams."

"It is true; I love her devotedly."

"Just so," responded the other, dryly. "And Uncle Nuzzer has told me of the strange disappearance of Miss Sallie Williams."

"Well?"

"Since she has disappeared, her whereabouts are unknown. Nevertheless, it stands to reason that she is somewhere."

"No doubt."

"And I should not be surprised," remarked the detective, "if she were not in some place nearer home than people might imagine."

"What do you mean, Mr. Zellers?"

"In this house, perhaps."

"This house?—my house?"

"Exactly."

Caldwell said nothing.

"You do not deny it," observed Keeneyes cheerfully.

"I beg you to continue," returned Caldwell, with agitation.

"My dear sir, you do not deny it because it is true; you do not admit it, for the lady's sake. You do well. Moreover, I may as well tell you that I know Miss Sallie Williams is concealed in this house. Her room is the last room on the right, opening upon the hall of your second story; and next to that room is her diningroom, where there is a table set for two."

Caldwell was very pale. "Who has revealed this to you?"

"No one."

Caldwell was relieved. "Then you have entered my house without my knowledge?"

"Exactly. I came in last night, while you and the lady were strolling in the flower-garden. The side door stood open. I went upstairs. I was in the lumber-room when you kissed Miss Sallie good night. You tell me you love her devotedly. My feeling for you warrants me in believing that you can also add, honorably."

"I can add, honorably," said Caldwell firmly.

"Then you and Miss Sallie Williams have been married in secret?"

"We have."

"Since she is your wife, why do you conceal her?" inquired the detective. "Now that I have proved that I know your secret, you can feel no delicacy in explaining its beginning."

Caldwell answered frankly: "Sallie and I loved each other."

"Yes, yes, I understand that. But the marriage——"

"Her mother refused her consent. She forbade me the house."

"Did the father, also object to you?"

"I think not. But of course he had to take whatever side his wife took. She took the side against me. Of course we knew that we could not win over Mrs. Williams. Nobody can win her over when her mind is made up."

"Why did she object to you?"

"She wanted Sallie to marry a rich man."

"What rich man?"

"Oh, I don't know that she was particular—just some rich one."

"And Sallie preferred some poor one?"

Caldwell smiled.

"Why did you build this house, Mr. Caldwell?"

"When I built it, or rather, when I began to build it, I believed that Mrs. Williams would consent to my suit."

"Then for a time, she appeared favorable?"

"Yes. So I began the house in great hopes. My salary is sufficient to maintain a wife, in a modest way, and the house would be something like what she was used to—it would cost all I had been able to save up."

"Then, when you found out that Mrs. Williams would not consent, you went on with the building?"

The house was nearly finished. I thought I could sell it, and at least make back what I was putting into it."

"Well?"

"Well, it was Sallie herself who suggested——" He paused.

"That you elope together?"

Caldwell smiled. "And she would come and live in this house, just as you have discovered. To avert suspicion, she pretended to go on a visit to a friend in Little Rock. As a matter of fact, we went away together, and were married."

"I see. But you didn't dare stay out of town, lest you would be suspected. So you came back at once?"

"We came back together, of course—at night—and slipped into my new house."

"Where she has been ever since?"

"Yes. The only time she leaves the house is at night; we wander about the grounds, and in the daytime she lies hidden. Of course it can't last always. In fact, it needn't continue now, only Sallie is nervous about letting the marriage be known—she is still afraid of her stepmother."

"But you are now her husband; you can take care of her."

"Yes, but Sallie feels that way—and after all, I'm in no hurry to get it into the papers. You can't imagine what a fine honeymoon this makes, living in secret, right in our native town. It's no end of an adventure!"

"What adventure?"

"I mean the romance of it all."

"Oh!" said the detective, dryly. "Romance? Possibly. I know nothing about romance. How long do you intend to keep this up?"

"That depends on Sallie's wishes," was the reply.

"I see. And now, Mr. Caldwell, will you tell me why your wife's father and stepmother take such little interest in finding where she is?"

"Why do you say they take little interest, Mr. Zellers? The fact is, that, up till a day or two ago, they believed her visiting a friend in the southern part of Arkansas.

"So Uncle Nuzzer told me. But, since learning differently, they do not seem to be excited, or alarmed, or interested."

"No doubt they think Uncle Nuzzer is mistaken, and that their daughter is really in Little Rock."

"Oh, no, they don't believe that. They know she has disappeared. They have known for a long time that she never stayed at Little Rock."

"How do you know they have?"

"Because they show no surprise now."

"But if they have known all along that she had disappeared, why have they kept it a secret?"

"Precisely what I have asked you, Mr. Caldwell."

"I don't know. I have never imagined that they were aware of my wife's disappearance."

"Then I can give you another bit of knowledge. One of them not only knows she didn't stay in Little Rock, but that she is in this very house."

"Impossible!"

"Nonsense! Nothing is impossible, the truth least of all."

CHAPTER XVII.

KEENEYES IN A HURRY.

Caldwell looked unconvinced.

Then he said as an afterthought, "Do you mean that you have told Mr. and Mrs. Williams that their daughter is concealed in my house?"

"Certainly I have told them no such thing."

"Yet you believe that they know it?"

"I know that Mrs. Williams, at least, has discovered it."

"She told you so?"

"No."

"Then how do you know it, Mr. Zellers?"

"When I entered this house, without your knowledge, last night, you locked me up in it, inadvertently. I was meditating upon some way of escape without breaking the window, when I heard a key in the front door."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Caldwell, uneasily.

"Do not be alarmed. I should have protected your wife, had that been necessary. The lady who entered was your wife's stepmother. She went upstairs and made her way to the bedroom. There was an interview of some nature—I was obliged to be discreet, hence could not hear the conversation. But I distinguished voices. I heard enough to know that your wife and Mrs. Williams conversed. Then she came away; she left the house."

"This is very strange," murmured Caldwell, "for my wife has not hinted to me of the visit."

"She did not tell you her mother was here last night?"

"Not one word."

"In that case, there is of course a secret between them; that explains it."

"But what secret could there be? Do you understand that I am keeping my wife secluded in this house solely to protect our love from Mr. and Mrs. Williams? Now it develops, from what you say, that Mrs. Williams knows she is here! In that case, why does my wife pretend to hide?"

"Why, indeed," murmured Keeneyes.

"And besides that," said Caldwell, with emotion, "why does she keep the secret from me? We have hidden together; we should share together, in everything. You have astounded me, Mr. Zellers."

"I presume I have."

"And you have made me very unhappy."

"Why so?"

"Not in showing that Mrs. Williams has learned of our marriage, but in proving that my wife would hide Mrs. Williams' knowledge from me!"

"Since I am to have an interview this morning with Mrs. Williams," remarked the detective, thoughtfully, "I will no doubt be able to find out what is the secret tie between her and her stepdaughter."

Caldwell cried out, as if unable to grasp the thought: "And Mrs. Willams knows that her daughter is living in this house!"

"Just as I have told you."

"And just as my wife has not told me," cried Caldwell, frowning.

"Just so," was the soothing answer.

(Continued on page fifteen.)

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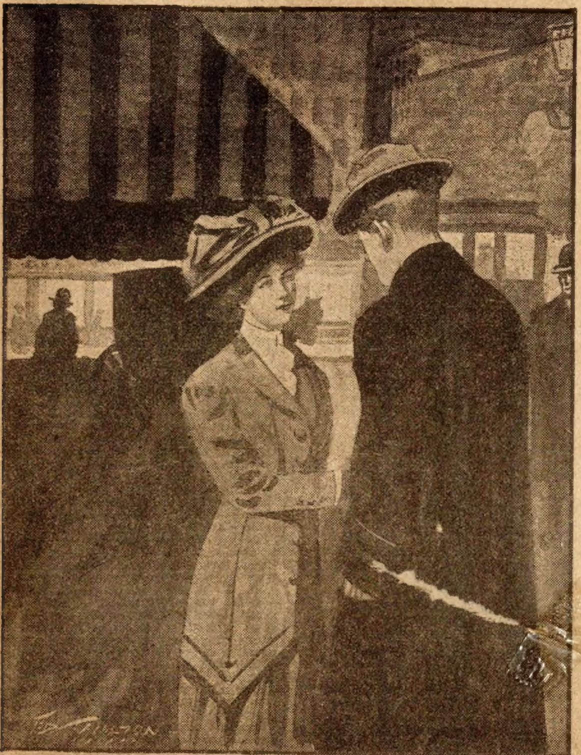

"If you knew you would not blame me."

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CHAPTER X.

THE MYSTERIOUS PAPER.

THE backward glance had discovered a man walking directly after the Texan, but the walking had been interrupted as Colgrave looked and the stranger leaped into a doorway. It was an agile jump, but too late to escape attention, while it clearly betrayed the business of the stranger.

Men who are abroad on honest business do not occupy their time with leaps from the sidewalk into wayside recesses.

Colgrave grappled with the situation coolly. It was surprising that his brisk gait had not taken him clear of the mysterious enemy, but it seemed otherwise and he was sorry he had not glanced back before.

"Now, then," was his problem, "how am I to baffle that knave?"

The means were not many nor the prospect favorable. He was in a section strictly residential, the time was night and few persons abroad. To run would be to invite seizure from the first policeman he encountered, and he could not hide. How, then, was he to effect his escape from observation?

Again he walked on, but thinking deeply. Another glance showed him that the stranger was following, and the advisability of turning back and confronting him was under consideration when he met a patrolman. There was no good reason why he should not look an officer fearlessly in the face, and he did so, but as he gazed after the patrolman he saw his follower turn into a side street. He did not, perhaps, have so clear a conscience.

It was Colgrave's chance, and he improved it. Still avoiding suspicious haste, he proceeded to do some brisk walking, marked by several abrupt turns into side streets, and when he finally relaxed his efforts there was no sign of the man who had dogged him.

Warily plodding on, he eventually grew satisfied with conditions, whereupon he turned his face homeward, apparently free from espionage. On his arrival he found Brickley, Mary, and a gentle-faced woman who was clearly Mrs. Olland. Brickley eyed his leader with keen, questioning anxiety, but Mary hastened to Colgrave's side with nothing but joy visible in her expression.

"Thank heaven you are safe!" she exclaimed. "Are you injured?"

"Not a bit," the Texan coolly answered. "And you?"

"Oh! nothing is wrong with us. We reached here without trouble, and Mr. Brickley has very kindly helped us——"

"All I have done," interrupted that person, "is to make arrangements for the ladies. Our landlady's friend chanced to be here calling, so it was very easy. We owe a good deal to the good will of our landlady. Mrs. Olland and her daughter can go to their new home as soon as you think advisable."

"That will be within the hour. I notice certain parcels which you evidently brought with you. You packed rapidly."

"Mother had it all done before we reached there," Mary explained. "During my absence she heard sounds in the unoccupied room below ours, and it so alarmed her that she tied up a few necessaries, intending to flee, anyhow. That is how we came away so promptly, parcels and all."

"Tell me, sir," cried the elder woman, "do you think there is hope that my husband lives?"

"I am very hopeful," replied Colgrave. "Why should not brief captivity serve the purpose of his foes as well as something worse?"

It was an evasive reply. Hope was not belief, and the impression was strong in his mind that Peter Olland would be seen no more by men. He had outlived his usefulness to Jason Starwake and his confederates, and those who plotted to slay by wholesale would not stay their hands when only a humble watchman was concerned.

"I wish," Mrs. Olland continued, "that I could be as confident."

"We are going to look into the matter, madam," the Texan promised.

"So we are," agreed Brickley, glancing at Mary.

"Mr. Colgrave," added the girl, "has spoken of visiting the old schooner and making a search secretly."

"I'm going aboard the Cormorant," said that gentleman composedly.

"You will risk your life," cried Mrs. Olland nervously.

"It will not be the first time. Now, then, if we are ready to proceed to your new home we will act. First of all, I'll go out and reconnoiter. Brickley, if I do not notify you to the contrary at the end of twenty minutes, bring the ladies out. I'll join you a few yards from the street door."

Mrs. Olland was eager to talk further about her husband, but under Colgrave's friendly exterior was a masterful force that led her to obey implicitly. Such a friend was not to be offended lightly.

He went out, reconnoitered as planned, was joined by the others, and in due time had them in their place of refuge. Promising to see them soon, and secretly dropping a roll of bank-bills into a chair, he went homeward with Brinkley. Late as it was, they sat down in the company of a couple of cigars.

"The world moves," remarked Colgrave calmly, as he smoked. "We have new threads in our web. Those fellows have made sure that the watchman will not talk for the present."

"It's my belief that Olland is a dead man," declared Brickley.

"The odds are staggering against his being alive, but, for the sake of his women, I hope he is all right. Who would have thought, when you and I were being pitchforked around that old hulk, that our sympathies would so soon be with the watchman? I hope this getting into friendlly relations with the Ollands will not overload our game so that it will ruin us."

"Did you get home without being followed?"

"Some stranger dogged me for a time, but I reckon I slipped him. Even if I didn't, my latest theory is that he was not one of the gang. More likely he was a law-breaker who aspired to knock me down and get a dollar or two. He surely was afraid of the patrolman I chanced to meet as he tagged after me."

Brickley had heard Mary Olland's story, but it was gone over again with Colgrave, after which both men went to bed. Both slept peacefully until a late hour, and they were at breakfast when the servant brought a note.

"Left here by Mrs. Winterholtz's hired girl, sir," she explained, as she laid it before Colgrave.

Mrs. Winterholtz was the new landlady of the Ollands, and the Texan made some haste in opening the communication. He read, and then looked at Brickley with surprise in his expression.

"Mary Olland is either a genius or a foolish girl!" he exlaimed.

"What's up?" asked Brickley anxiously.

"Listen! 'The morning paper has an advertisement for a chambermaid at Jason Starwake's house, and I am about to go there and apply for the position. Mrs. Winterholtz has written a reference for me. I have been very silent as to you, Mr. Colgrave, but frank as to our troubles, and she sympathizes with us strongly. You see, it transpires that she and mother were girlhood friends. I am not quite sure why I am doing this, but if I get entrance to that horrible house as one of the servant force I shall, be certain, be all eyes and ears. Frankly, I go as a spy. If I learn anything of interest you shall be informed.'"

"Why!" exclaimed Brickley, "the girl has sealed her own doom."

"She will disappear as completely as her father. She told me, last night, that she was convinced nobody of the Starwake family or gang knew her by sight, but don't you believe that. I feel that they do know her—I mean, some of the gang do—and they will recognize her and——"

His voice died away and he shook his head gloomily.

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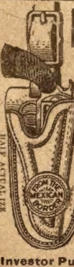

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Some mothers spare the rod and spoil the slipper.

It's a pity we can't see others as we see ourselves.

A stitch in time may save a dozen unprintable words.

A bachelor is just as good as a married man—or just as bad.

Even a healthy kangaroo is nearly always on its last legs.

The faster the man the easier it is for trouble to overtake him.

Satan takes a day off when a woman marries the wrong man.

If a girl tells you she can't sing, be wise and let it go at that.

Never judge a woman by the company she is compelled to entertain.

To please men, give them money; to please women, give them beauty.

You can't always depend upon people who call you by your first name.

Many a man would rather run for office than walk into an honest job.

A mother's idea of the only safe place for a boy to go swimming is in a bathtub.

Every time a man adds another dollar to his collection he lays up a little more trouble.

Beware of the man whose dog crawls under the house when its master enters the gate.

If a man's head is filled with wisdom he doesn't have to use his mouth as a safety valve.

When a man tells a widow that she is the only woman he ever loved she takes it with a pound of salt.

Talking about investing in mining stocks is all right—if you have sense enough to take it out in talk.

When a man is smoking it adds to his enjoyment if his wife worries for fear he will drop ashes on the floor.

If our neighbors would only do things as we think they should, how much easier it would be to love them!

Of course, silence gives consent. Did you ever notice how silent people are when you say anything mean about yourself?

(Continued from page seven.)

"She surely has taken a dangerous chance, but if they don't recognize her she may come out better than you think. There is force in that girl, and shrewdness, and her wits may be useful to her purpose and ours."

Again Brickley shook his head, and even Colgrave bore a downcast expression as he studied the case. Mary had planned to put herself into the thick of peril, and she was one against many.

"If I had been consulted I would not have permitted this," Colgrave added, "but if the die is cast I'll try to watch over her. Ah-h-h!"

He drew a long breath as he recalled the many things he had to do already. With his personal campaign against Jason and the conspiracy to steal the White House, it was likely to be a busy time without acting as champion of a rash girl. He quickly put this idea aside as selfish, resolving to work to the limit for the companion of his recent adventure.

Then came the thought again, that, if she gained entrance to the Starwake house, she might be useful to him, and he decided to hold his hand and permit her to manage her own case. Her interests and his might still work in unison.

The Texan was anxious to get to work on the undertaking nearest his heart, but he did not see his way clear for present action. Brickley was proceeding with the attempt to identify the companion conspirators of Starwake and Smith, which would be a gain when accomplished, but how were they to secure evidence against the gang until more developed?

This problem was difficult of solution, and as he saw nothing to do he decided to attend the President's reception, that day. Brickley, being invited to accompany him, preferred attending to his allotted task, so the Texan went alone.

In its general features the affair was like similar occasions he remembered from boyhood, but there was more. Standing with the crowd, and waiting to advance in line, he suddenly found a familiar face among a group of men at one side.

Adam Smith was there.

It was hard to credit, at first, but there was no mistake. The master conspirator was not only there, but in his dignified way he was wholly at home, it seemed. He was speaking, and his manner was serene, gracious and urbane, though the dignity was a mantle that set him among the class with whom nobody would jest lightly or venture to be exactly familiar. Some of his companions in the group were, as Colgrave soon learned, men high in Government service, and it was evident that he was trusted fully by them. Friendly relations were indicated in various ways.

The trip to Chicago, if ever contemplated, had been abandoned, and Smith was in Washington to proceed with his mysterious business.

Presently the group broke up and its members scattered. Colgrave kept a cautious watch upon Smith, noting how he moved among the crowd, giving a word to almost all who looked to be of importance, and the fact was staggering.

How was such a man to be defeated in a battle of wits?

As the conspirator moved and the Texan's regard followed him, something out of the ordinary occurred. Smith was passing a younger man in stylish attire, when, as they pressed close to each other, their hands almost touched and something like a white paper passed between them, after which Smith's hand went up to his pocket and the paper was gone.

It had been deftly done, almost like sleight-of-hand, and only a keen watcher would have noticed the occurrence. The keen watcher was there, and Colgrave had seen.

Next to him in the line was a good-humored man who had, from the first, been nodding to various acquaintances, of whom he certainly had many there, and as he carried an honest face Colgrave ventured a question.

"Who is the young man yonder with the auburn hair?" and he indicated the passer of the paper.

"Who?" was the amiable response. "Why, that's Cartley, one of the assistant private secretaries to the President."

Colgrave murmured his thanks, wondering why Mr. Cartley was in secret relations with the master conspirator. Unless he mistook the meaning of events the plot was reaching close to the presidential chair.

"He's a talented and popular fellow," pursued the informant, "but if you want his services to solicit an appointment from the President it will be of no use. Cartley guards the chief magistrate even more sedulously than the head secretary."

"I'm not looking for office," the Texan answered grimly.

"My dear sir, you are a rare bird, if I may so express myself. You and I are the only two persons in Washington who can say that, but while I object to office because there would be too much work to do, I fancy you reject it because there would be too little. I read that in your face."

With amicable relations thus established Colgrave did not fail to ask concerning other men present. He picked out three in whom he had no known interest, and then indicated Adam Smith cautiously.

"And who is he?"

"Oh! that's Mr. Smith. He is a heavy holder of steel stock in all quarters, or so it is said; but chiefly he is known as the inventor of a smokeless gunpowder. If you want to learn more about the powder you will have to ask Smith, for I'm not in. Only Smith and the Government are. Rumor says the Government wants to handle the explosive, but that Smith wishes to experiment a bit more before letting them try it. You see he has a long head, or a very white conscience."

"Impressive-looking man."

"He does impress everybody. Knows all hands in official Washington, too, and is said to be a millionaire."

At this point the forward motion of the line stopped conversation, and Colgrave took no trouble to renew it. When he had seen the President he went out and walked away thoughtfully.

He knew something more about Smith, but another question was uppermost in his mind. What about the secretary who had passed the secret paper?

CHAPTER XI.

A CHAMPION IS WANTED.

Colgrave found the latest developments startling. The friendly relations existing between men of high station and Adam Smith showed clearly how that master conspirator stood, and his power was a thing to dread. It would require much to dislodge him from his stronghold, and convincing evidence to make any one believe ill of him. The further the Texan went in his investigation the higher Smith towered, a grim, indomitable, strongly fortified figure that might laugh at anything less than an earthquake.

"I reckon," thought the investigator, despondently, "that I may as well get back to Galveston. Smith fits into a space where I am a loose peg."

In imagination he found himself packing his trunk to go, but the downcast mood passed as he remembered Jason Starwake and the events that had so nearly cost him his life. It was not the way of the Southwest to run from enemies, and his backbone stiffened and he resolved to fight the matter to the end.

Getting again upon his mental feet, as it were, he recalled something more. In the White House crowd a paper had been passed secretly to Smith by Cartley, one of the President's secretaries. Why had it been done on the sly, and what was the paper?

"Nothing about honest inventions," mused the Texan. "No business transaction about that affair. Smith had prior knowledge of the fact that he was to receive the document, and it shows a weak point in his gift of cunning that he permitted it there. He has made a slip, and it has introduced the secretary to my notice. Now, what about Cartley?"

A closing of the eyes and a quick reopening and Colgrave figuratively pinned Cartley to the wall.

"Here is a man close to the President, a trusted member of his official family, but a villainous traitor. He has full run of the official part of the presidential mansion, he sits with the Chief Magistrate, he hears Governmental secrets and has it in his power to be loyal or a vile conspirator, and he sees fit to walk a devious path with Adam Smith. A traitor at the President's elbow! Whew! it's staggering!"

The Texan's feet were mechanically taking him home, but he saw nothing that was by his way.

"A Judas at the President's elbow!" he meditated. "Right there is Smith's main instrument for working his scheme. But how—how?"

Cartley's iniquitous part was still under consideration when home was reached. He entered and found Brickley already there.

"Got them!" said that young man briefly.

"Eh?"

"Tripp, Ward, Steele and Black, you know."

"Oh! Well?"

Brickley explained. He had accomplished the task of placing the other members of the gang, and he rolled off a list of honors, high positions and supposedly unimpeachable character that would have been dumfounding had not Smith, Starwake and Cartley dwarfed all others.

"The conspiracy takes in all dignitaries except the President and his cabinet!" quoth Colgrave with humorous sarcasm.

"You forget yourself and me," reminded Brickley.

The leader nodded and looked sharply at his companion. He wished he knew just how far it was safe to trust Brickley. It was lonesome to be in so big a game alone. He longed to discuss all points with somebody, but he had barely broken the ice in his acquaintance with that young man and it was not time to reveal too much.

Possibly, however, Brickley was the only man in Washington whom he could induce to believe that the White House was to be stolen.

"I wonder," Colgrave presently resumed, "how Mary Olland has fared in her business affair."

"Oh, I forgot to tell you. Another note has come from her—here it is. Ad-

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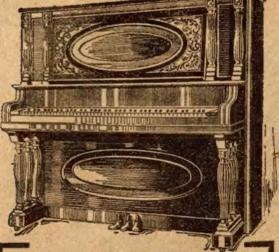

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dressed to you, so I've not opened it."

Colgrave tore the envelope and read hurriedly. From one point of view it was good news. Mary briefly announced that she had secured the position in the Starwake mansion, and was to enter upon her duties at once. Colgrave explained, and then he and Brickley sat a long time silent. There were great possibilities in having an ally in that quarter, but Brickley finally shook his head.

"You fear for her," said the Texan slowly.

"The gang put her father out of the way, and she has walked into the jaws of the trap to try and learn why. What if those jaws snap again?"

"It takes a quick animal to dodge the kick of a trap, but if dodging is possible that girl won't be snared. She is as sharp and brave a little miss as walks Washington soil."

"Yes, but—I wonder where her father is?"

"At an early date I'm going on board the Cormorant again. They have a new watchman, of course, but unless there is more than one I reckon I can gain her deck unseen. If I fail I shall probably be shot, but if I succeed I'm going to know what is below decks."

"It's risky, but I will gladly try it with you——"

"Unless there is on unexpected turn in affairs, I go alone. Two would be more conspicuous than one, and as it's a secret game I reckon the lone hand is the proper card to play."

With this the Texan suddenly turned to the address on the envelope from Mary Olland.

"Good!" he commented. "She has not forgotten that I am known here as Clarke. It was risking something when I thoughtlessly told her my real name, but I reckon I made no mistake. I regard her as a loyal ally. As for mistakes, I fear I have made at least one. When I left the White House I was despondent, and weighted heavily with thought, but I now realize that I should have waited and dogged Adam Smith to his stopping-place. I'm inclined to go back now."

"I'll offer a suggestion. Prominent as Smith is, he is likely to be around the big hotels tonight, unless he has business on hand. Why not locate him there, watch him, and finally track him to his home?"

The suggestion pleased Colgrave, and he resolved to adopt it. The remainder of the day was passed quietly within doors, except that the Texan took a walk past the Starwake mansion, hoping to see Mary. He failed in this, but did see Marcia moving about the grounds. She was not aware of his proximity, so he had a close survey, and as he gave heed to her face he was shaken in his previous verdict that she was in sympathy with her adopted father's violent acts. Surely, the face was not that of an evil-minded person, but as he remembered that he had judged her by her own words, he was reluctantly compelled to admit that all faces are not true indexes to the heart.

He went on his way without having made any discovery, and returned to his quarters, but it was with the decision that he would try Brickley's suggestion. When evening came he started to look into the leading hotels of the city.

The first step in success was promptly achieved, for in the lobby of one he found Smith in conversation, his manner at once dignified and urbane. He was one of a group, each member of which was suggestive of the man of success in some line and of power. No person seemed to be prominent over his fellows then, but Smith appeared as the acknowledged equal of the others.

While he watched, the master conspirator undertook to find a trivial something in his pocket, and in so doing he also produced a key with a long tag attached. The arrangement told something, and Colgrave went to the desk and scanned the register. Smith's name was there, and one question was answered.

The hotel was his Washington home. The Texan was working slowly back toward the group, when, the lobby being well filled, he found two men in his path. He was about to avoid them when he recognized them as Ward and Black. Watching Smith with sidelong glances, they were speaking guardedly.

"That august cabinet officer would not be friendly if he knew him as he is," remarked Black.

"He won't know until it is too late, and in the meanwhile his misplaced confidence is a fine thing for us."

"Smith has the good will of all."

"And the power to use it."

"Power! Why, who has more in the United States? Perhaps you will say the President, and he is surely a tremendous force in national affairs, but Smith will bend him to his will. What then? Why, though Smith does not command any army nor openly rule sixty million people, he treads hard upon the Chief Magistrate's heels in power. He surely is the President's rival."

"And likely to win at least one bout. Enough of this, however! We had better talk of something else."

The idea was carried out, but one expression had been used that struck Colgrave forcibly. The President's rival! He could not dispute the claim conveyed, but it was startling in its brevity and suggestions. The President's rival in power!

Worse yet. Washington lived its usual life without suspicion, and Adam Smith plotted, a power behind the presidential chair.

Once more the inclination came to Colgrave to go straight to the President with his story, but the old objection arose. Who would believe so strange a tale? Who would believe that a humble person had come from Texas and developed so remarkable a plot?

Colgrave did not try to find the President.

The big, eminently respectable hotel did not offer promise of any revelations, and the Texan soon tired of it. He went out and started for his quarters. The night was unusually quiet and the hour sufficiently late to establish the line between early and late movers about, but this did not impress him at first. Leaving the principal streets he was soon traversing the humble section where he lodged, and only a few blocks distant from there.

Presently he heard the quick beat of a horse's feet behind him, a sound that rapidly drew nearer. He felt no interest and did not turn his head until the carriage drew up close at hand, and so suddenly that bits of earth and gravel whirled to the sidewalk.

"Sir!" exclaimed an unseen person in a feminine voice, "may I ask for your attention?"

He pulled himself about, full of wonder. A closed vehicle was there, with a single horse, and with a driver on the seat, but he passed all this by. The door of the carriage was open, and framed in the aperture was Marcia Starwake.

He saw that she was pale and evidently worried, even frightened; but his courtesy did not desert him, and supposing he was recognized, his hand strayed to his hat.

"I beg your pardon for addressing a stranger," she pursued, "but I am being harassed by an unprincipled man. He is following me, and I would baffle his purpose. I need a male defender—may I ask that you will understand my motive clearly, and save me from the wretch?"

She glanced backward.

"See!" she added, "the pursuer is there. Even the sight of a gentleman at my side has led him to bring his horse to a walk."

Colgrave had seen and heard. Miss Starwake was in full light and his face in shadow. She had not recognized him, and he was glad of it, but his purpose would have been the same in any case. He put his hat back upon his head, nodded sharply and stepped toward the carriage.

"Madam," he replied, with continued courtesy, "I comprehend, and I am at your service. You shall have my best efforts, and I'll try to prove that you made no mistake in terming me a gentleman."

"Sir, I thank you greatly!" she exclaimed.

"I am glad to serve you."

He was now by the carriage, and as she drew back he entered and she made a seat by her side. Had she been anybody else he would have preferred to wait and try to have a word with the unknown man, and to flog him soundly if he persisted in making mischief; but it was far from his purpose to miss the chance of getting better acquainted with Marcia Starwake's secrets.

She had spoken to her driver and they were quickly moving again.

"I have been followed," she repeated, "but I don't know by whom. It is exasperating beyond measure."

"Madam, I think we shall manage to defeat the fellow. Who has the better horse?"

"My driver has been unable to outstirp the stranger, and I fear he has not shown us his full speed."

"If speed cannot win for us we will find a different way. May I ask your destination?"

"I will tell you frankly that I am Jason Starwake's daughter, but I would not willingly have yonder man learn that fact."

"Quite right," Colgrave agreed, though he felt certain that he was not getting the whole story. "Have you a plan?"

"It is to ride on rapidly for some distance and see if your presence here is not enough to make him abandon his pursuit. If not——"

"Yes?"

"Oh! I don't know what then!" she exclaimed nervously. "Can you suggest something? I have been so alarmed, so miserable, but it means a good deal to have you here."

The Texan nodded. He, too, thought it meant a good deal, but it remained to be seen what would come of it.

CHAPTER XII.

SOMETHING IS LOST.

The carriage bowled along briskly, the driver flicking the horse lightly with his whip, but having the air of one who has seen a difficulty surmounted. Like his fare, he probably considered Colgrave a safeguard.

"I had been on a call," Marcia explained, "and when I started back the other carriage fell in behind me—I don't know who is in it, but he has been a bloodhound."

"Did you try waiting to let him close in and announce his business?"

(Continued on page sixteen.)

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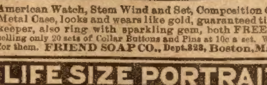

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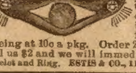

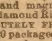

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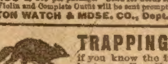

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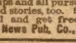

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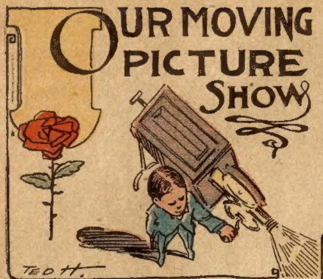


Makeshift.

"I thought you were going to take a day off and enjoy a trip into the country?"

"Had to give it up," replied the man with a cheerful disposition. "But we did the next best thing. We got some hard boiled eggs and some canned goods, and ate them out in the back yard."

◆

As He Is.

"I always agree with my husband."

"Very sweet of you."

"Except, of course, when he is in the wrong."

Brother's Bright Prospects.

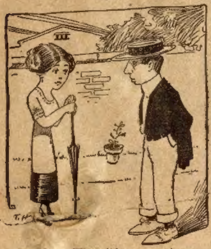
A group of little girls were discussing the merits of the babies in their families, and each was striving to outdo the others in reciting the virtues and achievements of the home infant.

"My little sister is only 7 months old, and she has three teeth," said one.

"My little brother is only 6 months old, and he has four," boasted a second.

"My little brother hasn't any yet," ventured a third, "but when his do come they're going to be gold ones."

◆



Geraldine—What did pa say when you asked him for my hand?

Gerald—I don't remember his words; I simply recall that he had a high instep.

◆

Not So Bad.

"I once got a man to take a $5,000 life policy, and he met with a fatal accident within a week."

"You must have wished your persuasions had been less successful."

"Oh, I don't know. You see I married the widow."

An Illusion.

"Willie Lowbrow seems to be an exceedingly busy man," said Maude. "Whenever you see him he is going on a journey."

"That's merely an impression," replied Mamie, "but due to the fact that he carries his laundry downtown in his suitcase."

◆

They Do.

"I suppose everybody is anxious to serve you."

"It seems so," said the sardonic millionaire. "With a subpoena."

◆

Poetic Fallacy.

"Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness!" sighed the man who quotes poetry.

"What's the use of talking nonsense!" rejoined the matter-of-fact friend. "If you had a lodge in a wilderness it wouldn't be two weeks before you were clamoring for a railroad and a real estate boom."

◆

Crowded Out.

"Anyway, her heart is in the right place."

"I don't believe it."

"Why, she is noted for her charities."

"I know it, but look how she is laced."

◆

An Extra Session Test.

"It takes a good deal of will power to be a great statesman, doesn't it?"

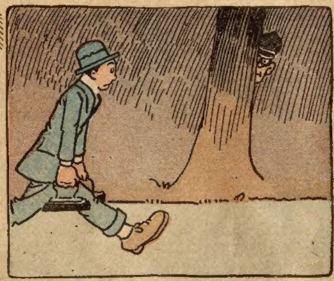
"An unlimited amount," replied Senator Sorghum. "Think of being obliged to discuss the tariff when your mind is on golf or fishing."

TICKLISH TACKLES

Suited Both.

Caller—I greatly like the tone of that picture.

Mrs. Shoddle—Oh, I wouldn't buy anything that wasn't high-toned.



Mr Subbubs—Well, I'm nearly home with these pesky old flatirons. I'm sorry I bought them!

Power of Example.

First Footpad—They say this 'ere electrocutin' is more humane than hangin'.

Second Footpad—Yep.

"An' they say that's why they adoptered it, 'cause it's more humane. See?"

"Yep."

"Well, let's use sandbags hereafter. That's more humane than chokin'."

◆

A Careful Husband.

Friend (after tea)—Your little wife is a brilliantly handsome woman. I should think you'd be jealous of her.

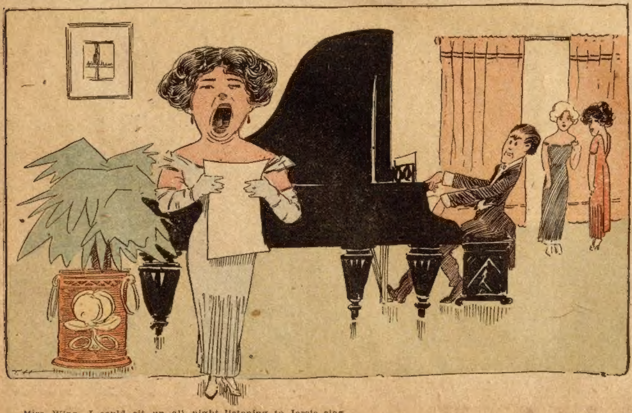
Host (confidentially)—To tell the truth, Simpkins, I am. I never invite anybody here that any sane woman would take a fancy to.

◆

Another Plan.

Aged Admirer—Think of all the luxuries a rich husband like me could give you!

Miss De Young—Oh, a rich father would do just as well. Marry my mother.



Miss Winn—I could sit up all night listening to Jessie sing.

Miss Foy—If Jessie sang you'd have to sit up.

Exemplary George.

She admitted being jealous of her husband. Consequently they quarreled frequently and, womanlike, she confided in her best friend.

"You are unfair at times to George," said the best friend one day, as the two sat on the veranda of the suburban home. "I saw George in the city yesterday and he didn't see me. So I kept watching him. He had a seat in a crowded subway car. At least two score women, most of them pretty as a picture, came in and passed by him or stood in front of him. And George never looked at one of them; he was deeply interested in his paper."

◆

Fooled the Customs Officers.

A well known Milwaukeean, who recently returned from a trip through Europe, is said to have smuggled in some dutiable goods.

Asked by one of his intimate acquaintances if he was not nervous when getting the stuff through the customs office without declaring it, he replied:

"Oh, no; you see, my wife packed the stuff away, and she can put stuff into a trunk so that she can't find it herself."

Acme of Bliss.

Cholly—My bwother is in luck. He's got a place as floorwalkah in a dry goods store. He is there sixteen hours a day.

Awther—I cawn't see the luck.

Cholly—You cawn't? Why, his pawnts can nevah bag at the knees.

◆

No Harm.

"But, daughter, I have always warned you against marrying a spendthrift."

"I know, but you never advised me not to be engaged to one."

Not on Thursday.

Far from the madding crowd (in the diningroom), Bertha and Bertie cooed together under the library palms, says Answers. They had been engaged for nearly a fortnight, and the blissful flight of time had left them eager for the day.

"Is it too soon to think of it, Bertie?" she asked.

"No, never too soon!" replied Bertie, striking his head fervently against the mantlepiece.

She pressed her hand to her throbbing heart, while he pressed his to his aching temple.

"Then, dear," she murmured, "let it be three weeks from Thursday."

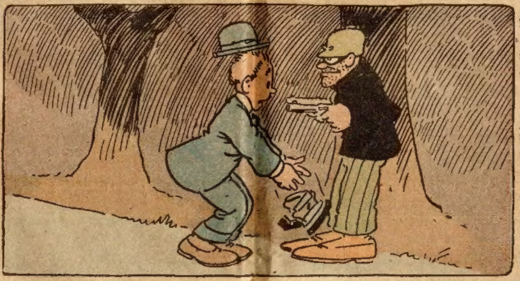
"Beggin' yer pardon, miss, but you'll have to make it hearlier in the week!" said a voice through the keyhole. "Thursday is my day hout!"

◆

How It's Done.

"I wish you would get rid of those old chairs and that worn out sofa. They're not a bit of use to any one."

"They're not? I want you to understand that I'm keeping them to put in our summer cottage when we rent it furnished."



Hold Up Man—Hi! Throw up your hands and shell out yer valuables quick, or——

The Rival Editors.

An Iowa editor who attended a party was smitten with the charms of a fair damsel who wore a rose on her forehead, and thus gushed about it:

Above her nose
There is a rose;
Below the rose
There is a nose
Rose, nose,
Nose, rose,
Sweet rose,
Dear nose.
Below her chin
There is a pin;
Above the pin
There is a chin;
Pin, chin,
Chin, pin,
Sweet pin,
Dear chin.

Whereupon a rival editor thus apostrophized the Iowa chap:

Above the stool
There is a fool;
Below the fool
There is a stool;
Stool, fool,
Fool, stool,
Old stool,
Dampfool.
Below his seat
There are two feet,
Above these feet
There is a seat;
Seat, feet,
Feet, seat,
Soft seat,
Big feet.

◆

Heaped No Coals of Fire.

A colored woman went to the pastor of her church the other day to complain of the conduct of her husband, who, she said, was a low down, worthless, trifling nigger. After listening to a long recital of the delinquencies of her neglectful spouse and her efforts to correct them, the minister said: "Have you ever tried heaping coals of fire upon his head?" "No," was the reply, "but I done tried hot water."

The Interview.

"What did that statesman say when you asked him for an interview?"

"Very little," replied the faithful scribe.

"What's that big bundle of manuscript?"

"That's what he'll think he said when I get it written out and submit it to him for verification."

◆

Sarcasm.

"Look out," said the woman with the determined look, "or that dog will bite a piece out of you."

"Well," replied Plodding Pete, "rememberin' dat handout you passed me last week I wouldn't blame de pup for goin' in desperate for a change of food."

It[illegible]ind.

"A shoemaker has a looking glass sort of life, hasn't he?"

"How so?"

"Doesn't he reverse all usual rules by starting with his 'last' work first?"

Wealth in Vermont.

Fred Emery was visiting in the mountains of Vermont last summer when he met, on the road, a long-whiskered and talkative old man. There ensued the following conversation between the mountaineer and Emery:

"Be you acquainted in these parts?"

"I sure be."

"Be you acquainted with Seth Anderson?"

"I sure be. I know Seth well. He lives up on the valley road."

"Waal! waal! Be you acquainted with Cy Southbridge?"

"I sure be. He lives down on the mill road."

"Waal, now! Be you acquainted with Cy's daughter, Mary?"

"I sure be. She's a mighty likely looking girl."

"Waal, Mary is married to a wealthy man—an allfired wealthy man!"

"You don't tell me!"

"An allfired wealthy man! Why her husband is worth $100!"

◆

Needed Covering.

On the morning after the Charleston earthquake a family was sitting half-clad, shivering in the dawn.

"Oh, Aunt Fannie," said the young woman, "there's a horrid big worm on your shoulder."

"Leave it on, Aunt Fannie," said the young woman's husband. "You need all the covering you can get."

◆

When to Fly High.

First English Sparrow—The Legislatures are offering rewards for our heads. Aren't you scared?

Second English Sparrow—No, I shan't worry until they call us game and pass laws to protect us.

◆

The Western Test.

Eastern Man—Dugout City is rather a young city, isn't it?

Western Man—Dugout City ain't no infant, I kin tell yeh. It smokes.

Physical Limitations.

There was a very stupid play presented early in the New York season, an "adaptation" it was called by the author. Even the best-natured critics went away in disgust. One newspaper representative turned to another and said: "If this jumble had been presented on the other side of the water it would have been hissed. As there were a lot of foreign visitors present I wonder that it was not."

"It really is a wonder," was the other's reply. "I would like to have hissed myself, but—you can't yawn and hiss at the same time."

◆

The Only Way.

"Got the last word with my wife this morning."

"How did you manage it?"

"Yelled it up the tube as I went out the vestibule of our apartment house."

◆

A Reason.

She—He says he loves me, yet he has know me only two days.

Her Friend—Well, perhaps that's the reason, dear.

◆

Sizing Up a Son-in-Law.

"I hear your daughter has been getting married?" said the tailor's neighbor.

"Yes, that's right," said the tailor.

"And you are going to take the young man in business with you?"

"No; he's not the kind of a goose the tailors generally use."

◆

Friendless.

Cashier—You must get some one to identify you before I can cash this check. Have you any friends in this town?

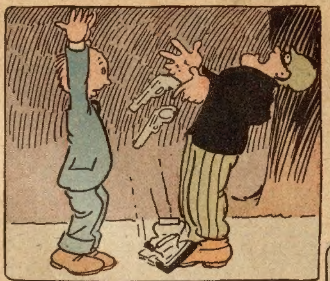
Stranger (sadly)—Not one. I am the tax collector.

◆

A Way Out.

Wife (emphatically)—I can't put it off another week. We must clean house.

Husband (coaxingly)—No, don't. Let's touch a match to the place and begin fresh.



"Wow! Ouch! Git off my feet. O-w-w! Haven't you got any sense?"

Some Feet.

Two old farmers were seated in the parlor telling of their experiences in life.

"Talkin' o' long feet. I seen some t'other day that both together made a yard," said the younger of the two.

"Humph!" replied the other. "I once saw a man whose feet were so long that he had to back up to the floor to knock."

◆

Still Wondering.

Ethel—The professor says that my bathing suit is exiguous.

Alice—Is that a compliment?

Ethel—I don't know. There isn't a dictionary in the hotel.

◆

If at First, Etc.

Pedestrian—Hey! You just missed me by an inch!

Chauffeur—Be patient! I'm coming back directly!—Puck.

His Request.

"There is one thing I want distinctly understood," says old St. Chesnut. "If I ever get into a fight I don't want anybody to hold me. I can hold myself, so if you must hold somebody, hold the other fellow."

◆

"What's your husband so angry about?"

"He's been out of work six weeks."

"I should think that would suit him first rate."

"That's it! He's just got a job."

Wise Old Ma.

Modest Suitor—I am going to marry your sister, Jimmy, but I know I am not good enough for her.

Candid Little Brother—That's what Sis says, but ma's been telling her she can't do any better.

◆

Mrs. Henpeck's Pity.

"What is the funniest thing you ever heard of?"

"Why, I guess it's Henpeck's wife pitying a man she could have married but didn't.

A Complete Job.

"See that measuring worm crawling up my skirt?" cried Mrs. Bjenks. "That's a sign I'm going to have a new dress."

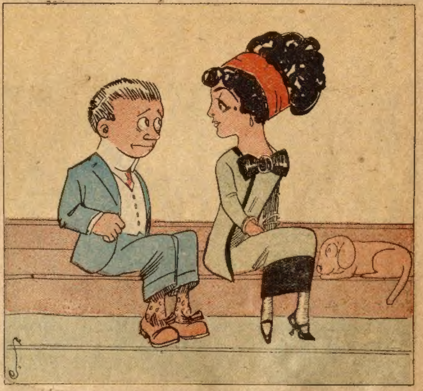
"Well, let him make it for you," growled Mr. Bjenks. "And while he's about it have him send a hookworm to do you up the back. I'm tired of the job."

◆

A Helpful Book.

Lady President—What book has helped you most?

New Member—My husband's check-book.



Miss Sweet—[illegible] bit you because he likes you.

Arthur—Tell me [illegible] get the beast to hate me.

Had No Warning.

Gibbs—Did you know your wife's first husband?

Dibs (with a sigh)—Yes; but he never put me onto his domestic affairs, confound him.

◆

Knew Her Place.

Mistress (engaging servant)—I hope you know your place?

Servant—Oh, yes, mum! The last four girls you had told me all about it!

◆

Surpassing Ordeal.

"I have been trying to umpire a game of baseball," said one summer boarder.

"That's easy," said the other. "They persuaded me to decide a disputed point in a game of croquet."

◆

The Cynic.

Wigwag—The secret of a happy married life is to marry one's opposite.

Cynicus—Yes, I have frequently remarked that your wife was a most charming woman.

Cheerful Prospect.

[illegible] R. MacDonald of Washington rented a farm a few miles outside of the city to escape the din and noise of town; but he soon tired of the trouble of looking after the place.

"I'm going to hire a manager to look after this farm," he told his family at breakfast one morning. "Then I won't have any more trouble. He can occupy a room on the top floor, and we will all have a quiet, easy time."

MacDonald leaned back and smiled serenely in anticipation of the coming rest and peace.

That night as the new manager passed through the hall on his way upstairs MacDonald stepped out and asked him if he cared to have the afternoon paper.

"No, thank you," replied the fount of rest and quiet. "I have a flute on which I always practice two hours before going to bed."

◆

Excusable Homicide.

"Yes, he's a good deal of a nuisance."

"What now?"

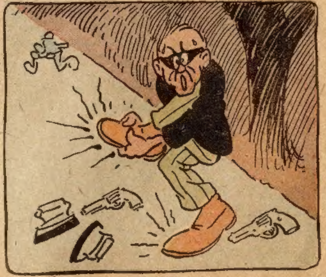
"Now he's going around jingling his money and bragging that he didn't take any vacation."

◆

Prejudice Well Founded.

Benevolent Lady—They tell me you are a woman hater.

Grumpy Gardener—Well, mum, what wonder? I've been married to four of 'em.

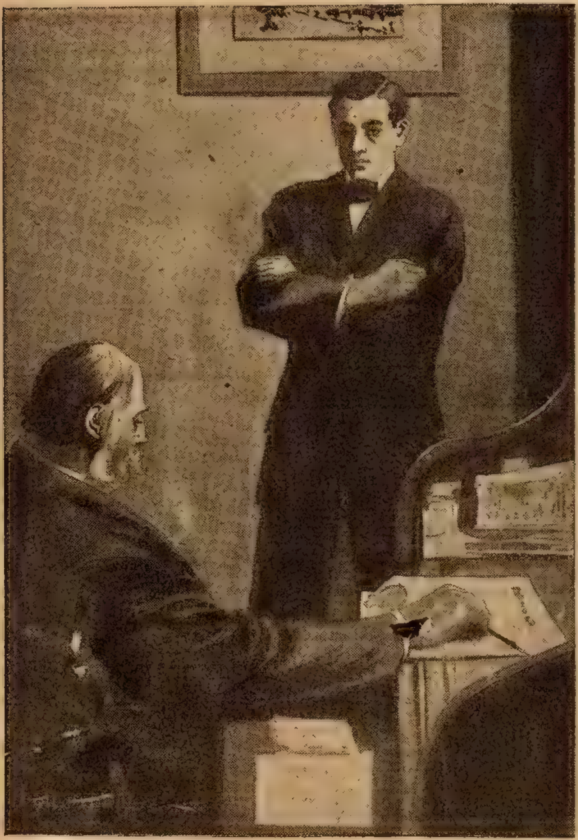


Mr. Subbubs—Gee! Those flatirons were the best investment I ever made. But he can have them.

THE MERRY GOOSE MINE;

Or, Dan Newton's Up-Hill Fight

By WILL LISENBEE



"After a year has passed come to me."

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CHAPTER XIII.

CAPTAIN HICKMAN had had an eventful life. When a youth of fifteen he went to sea and was a sailor before the mast for a number of years. Later, he became mate and then captain and part owner of a small schooner plying between San Francisco and the ports lying to the north.

But the loss of his vessel made him a poor man, and for a few years he drifted from pillar to post, doing whatever he could find to do. He was known among his friends as Captain Ben, and his kind disposition and habitual cheerfulness made the name a synonym of an engaging and genial personality.

He always looked on the bright side of life, and in the ups and downs of his eventful career he had never been morose or discouraged. Once when he had had a severe attack of rheumatism he remained a short time at the house of his sister, Mrs. Simpkins. She had cared for him grudgingly, and hinted that in the future he must not presume on her kindness of heart. He took the hint and got away as soon as he could, but from that day Mrs. Simpkins had been haunted by the fear that he would some time become helpless and be a burden on her.

The captain now smiled grimly as he crossed the lawn and walked in the direction of his sister's house. He felt that she would not be overjoyed to see him, especially if there was a prospect of his making a prolonged visit. But this gave him little concern. In the last year fortune had favored him in a measure, and he was exempt from the necessity of asking any favors of her.

He rang the bell and waited, while he took a survey of the surroundings.

Everything about the place pointed to the thrift and easy circumstances of the owner.

"It is nice to have such a home," thought the captain, "yet I should hate to exchange for it all the milk of human kindness that makes life worth living."

The door was opened by Mrs. Simpkins herself. She cast a quick glance at the visitor, and failing to recognize the face of her brother under its full beard, and thinking him a tramp, she said shortly: "We have nothing for you."

"Could you give me a drink of water?" asked the captain, a humorous twinkle in his eye.

"You can get water over at the town well."

"Probably you would not mind if I should sit on the porch here a little while?" queried the captain, helping himself to a porch chair and fanning himself with his slouch hat.

"I don't care to have you about the place," snapped Mrs. Simpkins. "If you don't move on I shall send for the town constable."

"That," said the captain, "would be a very uncharitable act. Town constables are, as a rule, cold and unsympathetic machines of an unfeeling law, and they hurt the feelings of timid supplicants of charity."

"I don't want you about the place," she insisted indignantly.

The captain rose slowly

"Madam, you may be sorry for this," he said.

"Do you dare threaten me?" cried Mrs. Simpkins.

The captain laughed.

"Now, Jane, don't you think this is an ungenerous greeting to give your dear and only brother?"

She gazed at him searchingly.

"Why, it is Ben!" she exclaimed.

"You've guessed it at last," he chuckled "I wanted to give you a little surprise. How are you, anyhow?"

She took the extended hand and tried to smile, but it was not a very cordial smile

"Come in," she said. "How are you getting on in the world?"

"Oh, I'm not complaining," replied the captain, as she led the way to the back porch.

"It's cooler out here than in the house," she said, as they took seats. "When did you come to town?"

"Just a little while ago. I see that you are very finely situated here. Must be doing well."

"Times are very hard," she replied guardedly.

"Yes, for the poor, but hard times never reach the rich, Jane. You ought to be thankful for your good fortune."

"I feel poor enough at times. Money matters are close, and we have to economize to make both ends meet."

"But what you call economizing would make the poor feel as if they were wallowing in wealth. It's a fine thing to be rich."

He gazed about the place with a sigh as if oppressed at the signs of opulence.

Mrs. Simpkins moved uneasily and struck at an offending fly that was buzzing near her face.

The captain got up and moved his chair to a spot where the cooling breeze came through an open door. As he did so he limped painfully, counterfeiting the movements of one suffering from rheumatism.

A look of apprehension crossed his sister's face.

"I hope you are not having another attack of rheumatism," she said.

"I hope not," he responded evasively, stooping to rub one of his lower limbs. "It would be a great misfortune."

"So it would, indeed," she nodded, a distressed look on her face.

"It would be worse of I were out among strangers, though," he added. "I am fortunate to be among relatives if I am to have another attack."

"I'm afraid it would not be convenient to care for you," she hastened to say. "I am not feeling so very well myself. You ought to go to Hot Springs and stay there till you are well."

No Hot Springs for me, Jane—not when I can have a dear relative to administer to my needs. It is a sad state of affairs to be sick among strangers."

"Ben, you ought to know better than to expect me to care for you every time you are sick. I have my own cares without being burdened with those of others."

"Then I reckon I'd better not have any rheumatism this trip," replied the captain, and rising, he executed the hornpipe with all the nimbleness of youth, whistling gaily the while to the time of his shuffling feet.

Mrs. Simpkins gazed at the performance with a look of amazement, which changed gradually to one of infinite relief.

"What a clown you are, Ben!" she cried. "I was really afraid you were going to be ill again."

"I never felt better in my life."

"I am glad to hear it"

"No doubt of it. I know you wish me well. You will be glad to hear that I am getting on well in the world, and I am not likely to be a burden on you. You remember that I had a few acres of land adjoining the town of Harrisville? Well, a railroad came through there and made the town the end of a division. They wanted some land to build a rip track and roundhouse on and I sold mine for three thousand dollars. I had a little sum besides, and I put the three thousand in the bank for a nest egg."

"Well, well! you are doing fine," cried his sister, beaming with smiles.

"Not so bad, I think. At least it is enough to keep me from being a burden on you if I should be sick."

"What a tease you are, Ben," she cried, "as if I should think it a burden to care for a sick brother. But you always were a great tease, even when I was a little girl."

The captain smiled, knowing what had made the difference, but he had no desire to press the point.

"Well, I am glad I was mistaken," he said. "I shall enjoy my visit all the better. I met Phil down in the village and he seemed almost ashamed of me."

"Phil is only a boy, Ben, and you must overlook what he does. He is very proud."

"I see. It was my clothes, I suppose After he gets older he may learn the difference in clothes and the man."

They conversed for an hour and then the captain rose to go.

"What! you are not going?" cried his sister.

"Yes, I may just as well. I am to take supper with a friend and it is getting on toward the time."

"Why, I didn't know you had any acquaintances in the town?"

"I made one this evening, and he has asked me to supper."

"But you will come back after supper?"

"Well, I'm afraid I can't. I'll have to stay with the Merry Goose, but I'll drop round tomorrow."

"You must, Ben I'm sorry you can't stay now."

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"Oh, I'll come around and make you a visit. I shan't be off till Monday."

"We shall look for you."

She went with him to the front-door where the faithful Toad was patiently waiting for the return of his master, and stood talking for a little while before she would let him go.

"What a difference a little money makes," he mused, as he walked in the direction of Mrs. Hampton's cottage.

He shook his head sadly

"Well, I'm glad there is something that will soften the hardness of the human heart. Jane seemed more like her old self than she has for a number of years."

CHAPTER XIV.

On arriving at Mrs. Hampton's cottage, the captain was introduced to Dan's aunt who made him welcome. He also became acquainted with Ray and Bessie, who found great pleasure in romping on the lawn with the playful Toad.

Dan and the captain sat on the back porch and talked while Mrs. Hampton was preparing supper. Their conversation turned on the new mining camp to which the captain was going.

"I was down there a month ago," he said, "and got a lease on a good lot near where a strike has already been made. There is little doubt that I shall strike something good. But there is a rough crowd there, as there is about nearly all mining camps, which is the disagreeable part of it. I have knocked about the world a good deal in my time and have mingled with all sorts and conditions of humanity, but I always tried to steer clear of drunken and vicious characters. If I could only find some good, companionable person whom I could depend upon to work with me—for I shall need a hand—I should feel greatly relieved. If you know of such a person here, and he would not object to working in the mines, I would hire him and take him with me."

"I know but a few persons here," Dan replied. "But it is likely my aunt may know of some one who would suit you. If I were a man I should like to have the job myself."

"You?" cried the captain. "Do you mean it?"

"Yes, sir. I have lately been thrown on my own resources and must find work."

"Then we may as well call the matter settled," said the captain. "You are man enough, and nothing would please me better than to have you."

"Thank you, sir."

"Have you ever worked in the mines?"

"A little, but I am not what you would call an experienced miner. I worked now and then in my father's mine at Minersville, just before it ran blind, but only as a shoveler and back hand."

"Oh, well, you probably know as much as I do then. I didn't expect you to have had much experience if any, but asked because I feared you might not like the work."

"That needn't trouble you. I shan't object to the work."

"That's good," replied the captain. "But as nothing has been said about the pay you are to receive, that is the next thing to be settled."

"Of course I shall not expect to receive as much as you would pay a man," said Dan. "I shall not be hard to satisfy."

The captain smiled.

"I see that you are not disposed to drive a hard bargain," he remarked. "But I shan't let you lose anything by it in this instance. I shall not work you hard. I don't intend to work very hard myself. I will allow you a dollar and a half a day. You are to live with me and assist with the cooking, while I shall furnish the grub. How does that strike you?"

"It is more than I expected," Dan replied. "I hope I shall be able to earn it."

"I am willing to take the risk. There are no houses in the new camp, excepting a few frame structures where miners' supplies and liquors are sold, and some log cabins built here and there by the miners, so we shall have to rough it. I have a pretty good tent, and I can have the Merry Goose hauled up to the mine, which will give us additional accommodations."

"I shall enjoy it," declared Dan, with enthusiasm. "It will be jolly to camp out all summer."

"I rather enjoy that sort of life myself. There are many people who would be stouter and enjoy better health if they would follow our example. We will have plenty of time to build us a cabin before cold weather comes on, so we need not worry about winter quarters"

At this juncture, supper was announced, and Dan ushered his guest into the little diningroom where a most tempting repast was spread.

The big bass, baked to a crisp brown, reposed on a large platter, and the very sight of it, the captain declared, was enough to give an appetite to a poet. He enjoyed the meal immensely, and remarked that the good things which Mrs. Hampton had prepared were a rebuke to such old bachelors as himself and demonstrated the superiority of the gentle sex over their so-called lords and masters.

After supper the whole family sat under the shade of a spreading elm listening to the stories told by the captain—stories of adventure by land and sea—till the twilight began to gather. Then the captain rose to take his leave.

It had been arranged that Dan should be ready to accompany him on the Merry Goose Monday.

"I shall feel very lonely when you have taken Dan away," said Mrs. Hampton to the captain, "and I want you to take good care of him."

"I shall surely do that," he responded, "and I'll promise to bring him safely back whenever he wants to come."

When Captain Hickman had taken his leave, Dan and his aunt sat in the growing dusk talking of their plans for the future. During the boy's brief stay she had grown so fond of him that he seemed like one of her own children.

"I hate to have you go away, Dan." she said, feelingly. "But you will promise to come back as often as you can"

"Of course I will. I hate to go away, but I must go where I can get work. I am well pleased with the job Captain Hickman has been kind enough to give me, and I shall be earning more than I expected to earn for some time yet. I shall try to save a dollar a day from my wages, for I shall not have much expense, and I shall soon have quite a sum saved."

"It seems providential that you met Captain Hickman. I know he will be kind to you and that he will see that no harm befalls you."

"He is a good man," responded Dan, "and has seen much of the world. I am not afraid to trust myself with him, even in the rough mining camp to which we are going, for I judge him to be a man of cool judgment and undaunted courage—one whom the rough element would respect and hesitate to trifle with."

"He impressed me the same way," agreed Mrs. Hampton.

"As I shall be earning more than I want to spend," Dan went on, "I want to make you my banker. I will leave fifty dollars with you, which you can place in the bank for safe keeping. I do not want to carry the money with me, and you may need it. If you should, it will be where you can get it"

"Oh, Dan, you are so good!" cried his aunt. "I will gladly take care of your money for you, but you mustn't expect me to use it."

"But you must if you need it," insisted Dan. "That is why I am leaving it with you. I shall add other sums to it from time to time, and who knows," he added with a smile, "but we may be able, sometime, to establish a bank of our own—in spite of Phil Simpkins' sneers?"

"Who knows, indeed?" she said, smiling. "How good you are to me, Dan. I shall never forget your kindness." She bent and kissed him, and when she lifted her face there was a gleam of moisture in her eyes.

That night Dan dreamed of the mines and of wonderful masses of glittering ore, and when he awoke the morning sun was shining brightly through the eastern window and the birds singing merrily among the dewy leaves.

CHAPTER XV.

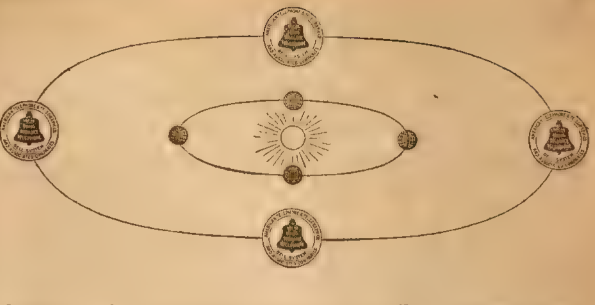
At ten o'clock Dan presented himself at the home of Judge Turkington. He was conducted into the library where the judge waited to receive him.

Judge Turkington was a man past sixty, with a grave but kindly face. He gave his hand to the visitor in cordial greeting, as he laid aside the Bible he had been reading.

"I am glad to welcome you to my home, my boy," he said. "I have been told of your former visit while I was away, and am sorry I was not here. I was shocked and grieved to learn of your father's death, and I want to assure you that I sympathize with you deeply. I lost my parents when I was near your own age, and for a time it seemed to me that all the pleasures of life were shut out from me. But God does not intend that we shall spend all our days in grief. There is work for us all to do and we should do it willingly and bravely. You have been left dependent on your own exertions to make your way in the world, I have heard, but I don't want you to feel discouraged."

"I don't, sir," replied Dan. "I am able and willing to work, and there ought to be something for me to do."

"That is bravely said," nodded the judge. "It was your father's desire that I look after your welfare, and it seems that I am to have an easy and pleasant task. It is not my purpose to burden you with too much advice. Such often tends to hamper individual effort and weaken the spirit of self-reliance. These are essential to any enduring success. If one has industry and honesty of purpose, coupled with moral integrity and self-reliance, it is a wise man, indeed, who could give him needed advice. I am pleased to discover that you are developing these qualities, but you must not forget that you may often have to reckon with misfortune. How many there are who, when they see the prize for which they have striven slip from their grasp, become discouraged and give up the fight. That is where so many careers that otherwise might have been brilliant, fail. Whatever you do or wherever you go, I want to be kept in communication with you; then, after a year has passed, come to me. Till then I want you to be, as far as possible,



Comparison of the Distance Traveled by Earth and Bell Telephone Messages

The Orbit of Universal Service

In one year the earth on its orbit around the sun travels 584,000,000 miles; in the same time telephone messages travel 23,600,000,000 miles over the pathways provided by the Bell system. That means that the 7,175,000,000 Bell conversations cover a distance forty times that traveled by the earth.

When it is considered that each telephone connection includes replies as well as messages, the mileage of talk becomes even greater.

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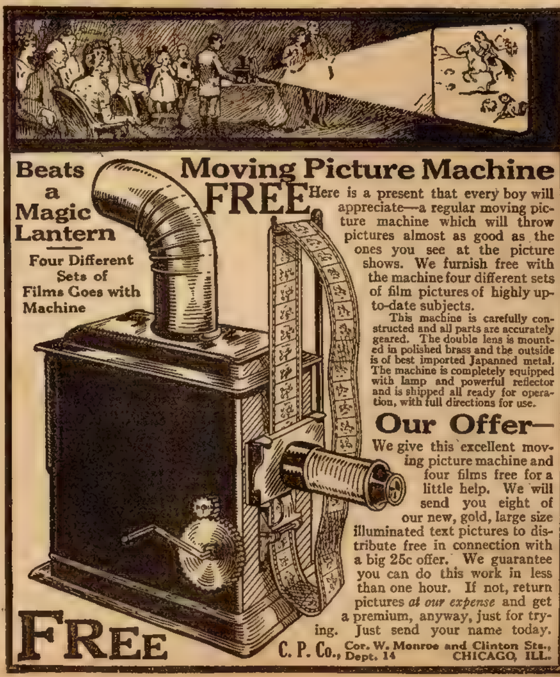

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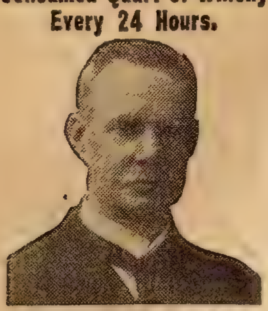

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I drank beer at first, then gradually developed into a drinker of strong liquors. When drinking heavily I wouldn't hesitate to pawn my coat or break a saloon window to get spirits. For long periods I would drink over a quart of whisky, rum or gin daily. And often some mixed drinks and beer additionally!

I damaged business, health and social opportunities, made family miserable, lost real friends and became an unworthy, unwelcome burden upon all except the saloonkeepers, who cheerfully took my money for the poison they gave me.

For 16 years I kept it up, and I was regarded as a hopeless case. Various "cures" did me no good. But now I have **a joyous message** for drinkers and

Mothers, Wives, Sisters

While drifting from bad to worse, as all slaves of King Alcohol do, I unexpectedly **found a true remedy.** It saved my life. **My health was quickly restored.** I became and am a respectable man, enjoying every benefit of freedom from the accursed alcohol. I speedily and naturally lost all desire for drink. I took less and less. I began to prefer tea, coffee, buttermilk and other non-alcoholic liquids; the **craving for liquor ceased**, I could sleep perfectly, my stomach became well and I recovered from other ailments which I now know were due to my indulgence in strong drink.

WONDERFUL

It was done in 3 days! If I had relied upon will power or faith I would still be a drunkard, because an alcohol slave has **no will power while drinking.** I rejoiced so greatly at having found true relief [illegible] devote my life to removing the curse from others. My success has been marvelous, for I have a reliable, guaranteed Set of Remedies adapted for sending to any home, anywhere. My Remedies have saved legions of drinkers; the list includes very many persons notable in all walks of life, including those of brains and those of physical energy. I will send you **testimonials by the hundreds**, every one of which you can verify. Many were saved from the drink habit because they *desired* to get rid of it forever and others who did not have any will-power left, were rescued *without their knowledge* by loving wives, mothers, or friends. The after effect of taking my Remedies give energy throughout the entire body; the mind, memory and will-power are *wonderfully strengthened.*

I tell about the secret in my book, which I send **FREE** to every person (or relative or friend) who takes alcohol in any form to excess. My one purpose in life is to **save the drunkard.** I rejoice in every victory; each victim has my sympathy. What I promise is absolutely guaranteed. My Remedies are for either **steady or periodical drinkers.** Think of it—**a complete** and **delightful overcoming of drink habit between Friday night and Monday night**—or any other 72 hours!

FOR MEN OR WOMEN, ANY AGE.

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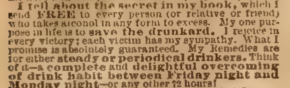

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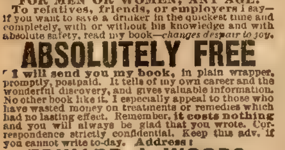

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on your own resources. Have you anything in view?"

"Yes, sir," replied Dan, "I expect to start to the mines at Jacktown tomorrow."

"What do you expect to do when you get there?"

"Go to work in the mines."

"Will not the work be too heavy for you?"

"I think not, sir. I have worked in the mines before."

"Have you any promise of work?"

"Yes, sir. Captain Hickman, a brother of Mrs. Simpkins, who is about to open a mine in Jacktown, and who is now on his way to the mines, has given me a job. I am to receive a dollar and a half a day and board."

"That is very fair pay for a boy of your age," nodded the judge, "and I trust you will find the work agreeable."

"Thank you, sir," responded Dan. "I shall do my best to make it so."

He explained the situation by telling what the captain had told him about the mines and the work to be done. They were still conversing when Mrs. Turkington came in and announced that it was time to go to church.

The family carriage was waiting, and Dan rode to the village church with the judge and his wife and Milly Dent. They occupied the pew with the family, and once he caught sight of Phil Simpkins across the aisle, but the latter kept his face turned away persistently and never once looked in Dan's direction.

Dan spent a very pleasant day at the home of Judge Turkington, and when he took his leave, the judge, Mrs. Turkington and Milly all joined in wishing him a pleasant voyage down the river and a prosperous future.

Early the next morning Dan packed his valise, and taking leave of his aunt and Ray and Bessie, he set out for the river. He found Captain Hickman ready to start, and entering the boat, they pushed off into the current, and their journey had begun.

The long shadows of the trees lay across the mist-wreathed stream, and a dewy freshness was in the air. Captain Hickman sat in the stern, holding the rudder, his pipe in his mouth, guiding the little craft with the ease of a practiced hand. It seemed very pleasant to Dan to sit in the shadow of the awning and watch the shifting panorama of wooded shore and towering cliffs as the Merry Goose slipped over the surface of the stream.

It is not our purpose to dwell on the voyage down the river, which was without event worth recording. The current was rapid, and the voyagers reached the landing near Jacktown just before sunset on the day of starting.

The Merry Goose was put ashore and the tent taken out and pitched.

"We'll just hang up here for the night," remarked Captain Hickman, as he kindled a fire and brought the grub box from the boat. "It is a couple of miles to the mines and we'll have to wait till morning to get our outfit hauled over."

Dan brought a bucket of water from the creek and otherwise assisted in the preparation of the evening meal.

"I want to learn to cook as soon as I can, as I am to help with the cooking," he said. "I guess I have a good deal to learn before I can call myself a professional cook," he added with a smile.

"It won't take you long to learn to fry meat and make coffee," laughed the captain. "That is the main thing just at present. After a while we may indulge ourselves in a few extras."

It was quite dark before they got supper ready, and they ate by the light of a torch which the captain brought from the boat.

After supper Captain Hickman put out a couple of lines, baiting the hooks with large angleworms, as it was too late to seine for minnows.

"We may get a cat," he said, "but I don't expect anything better."

After the lines had been put out the captain and Dan sat down in front of the tent, having extinguished the torch, as it attracted mosquitos and other insects.

They sat there conversing till bedtime, and then the captain said he would take a smoke and fix their bunk if Dan would run down and see if a fish had been caught.

It was some two hundred yards down the stream, the place where the hooks had been set, and Dan now regretted not having brought the torch, as he found some difficulty in finding the place. However, he soon located the fallen tree in the edge of the water to which the lines had been fastened, and making his way out along the huge trunk, he pulled on the lines gently. Nothing had been caught, and after assuring himself that the baits were intact, he was about to retrace his steps when the sound of subdued voices broke on his ear.

He paused to listen. As he did so he caught the sound of approaching steps. Some one was approaching from down the stream.

Instinctively Dan remained motionless, leaning against a huge limb that protruded from the trunk beneath his feet. A moment later two dark forms emerged from among the trees and paused in a little glade.

Dan could get a very indistinct view of the pair, and could not distinguish their features. One was a heavy-set man with a short-cropped beard; the other a rather slim person, evidently much younger than the first. They stood silent for a moment, while Dan remained motionless and breathless. He did not desire to make his presence known. He was doubtful as to the character of the two strangers. They might be desperate characters.

"I tell you, Silver," said the elder of the two, "I have been down on my luck so long that I am getting desperate."

"No doubt of it, Dave," responded the other in a low, caressing tone, "and my luck has been little better."

"Then why not go into this job with me?"

"I haven't said I wouldn't yet. But you must give me all the details."

"That is what I am willing to do, if you will only give me a chance."

"I am listening."

"You know Sam Ables?"

"The keeper of the grocery?"

"Yes."

"Is he the one you have picked out for a victim?"

"Yes."

The young man laughed.

"What's the matter?" growled the other.

"I guess you can count me out."

"Why?"

"You wouldn't take me for a man who would crack a cove oyster and cheese joint, would you?"

"If there was money enough—yes."

"He don't take in enough to pay our fare from Jacktown to the county jail," laughed the young man.

"If you don't lower your voice the sheriff may pay our fares for us," said the other with an oath.

"Don't be so scarey. There is no one to hear."

"That is all you know about it."

"Well, I shall be more cautious," replied the other, lowering his voice.

"You had better."

"Well, go on."

"Last Saturday was the Henderson Mining Company's pay day."

"What has that got to do with it?"

"A good deal. The money to pay off the hands who work at the new smelting works did not arrive on time and the men were not paid. But the money is to arrive tomorrow evening, some time, and the day following the men will be paid. The pay roll is about three thousand dollars. The only safe in Jacktown is one owned by Sam Ables. The money will be kept in that tomorrow night."

"I begin to see."

"I thought you would."

There was a brief interval of silence. With heart beating tumultuously, Dan waited for them to go on.

CHAPTER XVI.

That the men were desperate characters, Dan was now convinced, and a sudden fear that they might discover his presence assailed him. He would have been glad to have slipped away, if such a move could have been made without bringing discovery, but from his position on the fallen tree this was impossible.

To his great relief the men resumed their conversation.

"How did you find this out?" asked the younger of the two, who had been addressed as "Silver."

"I overheard the cashier talking to Ables, in the store this evening. I had come in and stood behind some boxes near the door, and they did not see me."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am sure of it, for I got out at the door, keeping the pile of boxes between them and me."

"That is good. They might suspect us if we do the job if they knew you overheard them. But how about the safe? Has it a burglar-proof compartment?"

"Not much. It's a big affair, and looks as if it would make a good icebox—I saw it when it was being unloaded—but we can walk through it as easily as we could a gasoline stove."

The other laughed.

"That may be," he remarked, "as far as you are concerned, but as for me, I couldn't get into a chicken coop."

"You can leave that part to me. It is easy when you know how. A little soap, some nitro-glycerin, and the thing is done. But let us move on. I want to show you the way to my den, where I retire when it is necessary to be out of the public eye for a time. If we pull this job off we may be in need of a quiet place for a while."

They moved on, and to the great relief of Dan, their footsteps soon died away in the distance. As soon as he was sure that they were gone, he crept from his place on the trunk of the tree and hurried in the direction of camp. He found Captain Hickman sitting in front of the tent calmly smoking his pipe.

"Did you hear any one pass this way?" Dan asked.

"I am not sure," replied the captain. "I thought I heard voices and steps a few moments ago. Why?"

Dan gave an account of his experience, telling all he had overheard from the conversation of the two strangers.

The captain was amazed.

Facts About Motherhood

The experience of Motherhood is a trying one to most women and marks distinctly an epoch in their lives. Not one woman in a hundred is prepared or understands how to properly care for herself. Of course nearly every woman nowadays has medical treatment at the time of child-birth, but many approach the experience with an organism unfitted for the trial of strength, and when the strain is over her system has received a shock from which it is hard to recover. Following right upon this comes the nervous strain of caring for the child, and a distinct change in the mother results.

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"Would you know them if you were to see them again?" he asked.

"No, sir, I don't think I would. I could not see their faces distinctly. One was a heavy-set man with beard; the other slim and smooth-faced and much younger than his companion."

"You said one was called 'Dave' and the other 'Silver'?"

"Those are the names they used in addressing each other. Have you heard the names before?"

"Not in connection with any one in Jacktown. But I was in the place but a few days on my former visit, and know scarcely any one."

"Do you know Ables, the groceryman?"

"Yes. I was in his store."

"We must give him warning?"

"Yes. We will drop in there tomorrow after we get moved over to the camp."

"Gee whiz! what if the robbers should be prowling about here and listening?" breathed Dan, lowering his voice and speaking in sudden alarm.

"You can rest assured that they are not," replied the captain, composedly.

"Why?"

"There is Toad lying in front of the tent. If any one should be prowling about here he would have given the alarm."

"Then he must be a good watch-dog."

"He is. I can lie down and sleep with absolute assurance that he wont' let a stranger approach without rousing me."

"It is fortunate then that we have him with us. Do you think there is any danger of the robbers paying us a visit?"

"I think not. In any case we need not lose any sleep over it. If they approach, Toad will notify us."

"Have you a pistol?"

"Yes; I always have one with me when traveling. I will have it where I can put my hand on it if it is needed."

They were not disturbed during the night, and the next morning, at an early hour, Captain Hickman and his youthful companion were astir. As soon as they had breakfasted, a farmer living near, was hired to bring his team and haul the Merry Goose and her cargo to Jacktown

The mining camp was not unlike many others that flourished in the lead and zinc mining districts in the early days of the discovery of the ores in Missouri. Rude log cabins and box shanties dotted the slopes and crowned the hills, with here a few frame structures in what was termed the business portion of the town.

Everywhere were visible signs of industrial activity. The dizzy whirl of windlasses, twinkling like spokes in an array of rapidly revolving wheels, stretched down the narrow valley and up the slopes as far as the eye could reach. Teams with wagons with dumpbeds were rattling over stony roads toward the busy sluices, and the rhythmic "chuck" of the jig boxes came faintly from the valley.

Dan Newton gazed with interest at the scenes of activity as they drove along the winding road that led down the valley through the mines. Now and then some passing miner would pause to make some jocular remark about the boat that sat so jauntily on the wagon.

"Hi there!" cried a youth, who was perched on a pile of waste dirt, directing his gaze toward Dan, "where're ye goin' with that goose?"

"Come and see," smiled Dan goodhumoredly.

"Can't spare the time 'less ye give me one of the eggs," grinned the youth.

"Bring that goose here and I'll duck it in the creek," called a man from one of the sluices.

And all along the valley as they passed, the boat was the subject of more or less jocularity.

The lot on which Captain Hickman intended to begin work was in a little dell, apart from the scene of so much activity, in the midst of a small grove of oaks

"We'll put things in shape about camp," remarked the captain, "and then we'll take a look about the town."

It was about two in the afternoon when they entered the business portion of the town. Few people were astir, for like most all mining camps, Jacktown was at its best at night. The only signs of commercial activity were visible in the saloons, where the clink of glasses could be heard above the subdued murmur of voices.

"There is Sam Ables' grocery," remarked the captain, indicating a low frame structure across the street. "I guess we'd better saunter over there and see him."

As they entered the building they were met by a dapper youth of near Dan's age who came forward brusquely, a pen behind his ear.

"Is there anything I can do for you," he asked.

"I called to see Mr. Ables," replied Dan.

"He is not in."

"Will he be in soon?"

"Yes; he only went to the postoffice. I act for him in his absence. You can state your business to me," said the clerk with an air of importance.

"I shall wait and see Mr. Ables," responded Dan.

"I am his confidential clerk. He will probably refer the matter to me anyway."

"Then you can wait till he does so," Dan answered.

The clerk looked annoyed.

"If you expect to apply for a job, I can tell you it will do no good," he said.

"Thank you; then I shall not apply."

"That is sensible. It will save Mr. Ables the trouble of refusing you. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"Nothing at all."

The clerk stood looking at Dan inquiringly, as the latter showed no intention of going out.

"Can I show you something?" he asked presently.

"Nothing, thank you," replied Dan.

"I hope you don't think it necessary to see Mr. Ables after what I have told you?" said the clerk.

"I think I had better wait and see him."

"But you said you did not intend to apply to him for a job?"

"I don't."

"Then why should you wait to see him?"

"Can't I see him without asking for a job?"

"But you said you wanted a job."

"You are mistaken. I said I should not apply."

The clerk looked disgusted.

An old man sitting on a barrel near by laughed.

"He's too much for you, Mark," he chuckled, addressing the clerk.

"Very clever," sneered the clerk. "I wonder his head don't burst."

At this juncture Mr. Ables entered. As he came in the clerk advanced to meet him.

"There's a boy here waiting to see you, Mr. Ables," he said.

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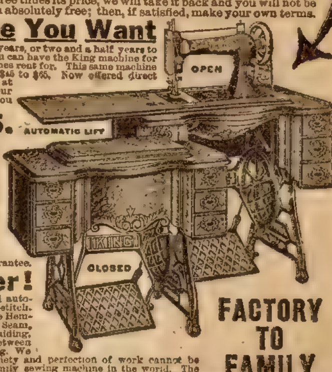

The Mysterious Detective

(Continued from page six.)

Caldwell had another thought: "Does Mrs. Williams know of your knowledge? Does she suspect that you know where my wife is?"

"No. She thinks herself alone in this discovery."

Caldwell rose. "If you will excuse me, Mr. Zellers, I must go upstairs and speak to my wife about this. I must find out why she has hidden from me such a vital matter."

"I cannot excuse you to do any such thing, Mr. Caldwell. In the first place, I must leave you to interview Weevely. In the second place, I have spoken to you confidentially, and I agreed to get you out of your scrape. That of course is conditional. You must do as I say. I insist that your wife is not to be informed that you are aware of the fact that her stepmother knows of her whereabouts."

"I do not see how I can agree to that," muttered Caldwell.

Keeneyes drew his watch from his pocket. "I must really go to meet my eight o'clock appointment," he said; "and you must promise to keep the secret."

"Anyway," said Caldwell defiantly, "since Mrs. Williams already knows of my wife's being in this house, she already knows everything; so there is no trouble you can keep me out of. There is no longer any secret."

"My dear Caldwell, my dear Caldwell," said Keeneyes reprovingly, "do you imagine it is for no light reason that your wife has hidden from you the fact that her stepmother has discovered her?"

"It should be from a serious reason, indeed," returned Caldwell bitterly.

"Very well," was the brisk retort; "it is from a serious reason. As a matter of fact, your wife is in Mrs. Williams' power. That is why your wife has not spoken to you of her stepmother's unwelcome visit of last night."

"How could she be in her power? If Mrs. Williams knows everything——"

"You provoke me, Caldwell! don't keep saying the same thing. Say something different, even if it's not so wise. It must be evident to you that there is a secret your wife dares not tell you. Very good. Wait till I have interviewed Mrs. Williams. Then I will come and tell you what it is. But don't disturb your wife about it, for she cannot tell; if she could have told, she would have done so."

"If I had time to reflect——"

"Good-by," cried Keeneyes. "I must meet my appointment. Reflect all you please—but if you speak to your wife of this before I see you, you can get out of your troubles in your own way! Good-by!"

CHAPTER XVIII

WEEVELY DEFIES KEENEYES.

Keeneyes left young Caldwell abruptly. There was no time to be lost, if he reached Weevely's office by eight o'clock. He hurried his step.

Just as the clock struck eight, he

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knocked at the real-estate agent's door. It opened abruptly, and Weevely looked forth.

"Oh," said Weevely, his lowering countenance more unpleasant than ever, as if his eyes were meditating some dark thought, "so that is you, is it?"

"It won't be me," responded Keeneyes cheerfully, "if you have any objections to this interview."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that I am here at your request; and I'll go away at once if my presence is undesirable."

"Of course it's desirable. I told you to come."

"You asked me to come."

"Yes, that's what I say."

"Very well, Mr. Weevely. You asked me to come, and I've come punctually. Look more pleasant, if you can, not as if I were forcing myself upon you."

"Come in," was Weevely's short retort.

Keeneyes airily entered the small office. The entire building contained but this one room. The rear door stood open, and Keeneyes observed an extensive lot stretching away from the rear threshold. This lot was overgrown with bushes, shrubbery of all kinds, and high weeds.

"I see," remarked Keeneyes, nodding toward the vacant lot, "that you have built your shack on what used to be a nursery."

"Well?" returned Weevely gruffly.

"Any water in it?" asked the detective playfully.

"See here, Mr. Zellers," said Weevely abruptly, "after what has passed, I don't see how you and I are to be very good friends."

"Nor I, Mr. Weevely, nor I."

"When you first came to town," the real estate agent continued, "I would have made up to you, but you turned me down."

"Yes, I turned you down," said Keeneyes smiling.

"That's what you did; you turned me down."

"Yes; but I haven't whipped you yet, Mr. Weevely. Why do you take this tone with me?"

"I take it with you so you'll understand that this is purely a business meeting."

"Very good; and why did you want me to come here?"

"You pretend to know a secret in my past life."

"Oh, Mr. Weevely—pretend!"

"Yes, pretend. For I deny it."

"If there is no secret in your life, why should you want me to come here to discuss it?"

Weevely rejoined eagerly, "Now, I'm glad you asked that."

Keeneyes said, "I presume your answer is, that you merely want to know what secret I mean to reveal, or rather to invent?"

"Yes—to patch up against me."

"Exactly; to prevaricate; you want to know in what way I mean to prevaricate, eh, Mr. Weevely?"

The other did not answer; there was something in the eyes of the detective that silenced him.

"Come, Mr. Weevely," said Keeneyes gently, "would you like to say that I am lying? If you have a fondness for that word, maybe I can cure you of it."

"I have only this to say, Mr. Zellers—that there is no secret in my life."

"Oh, you lucky man!" sighed the detective, shaking his head as if in secret admiration. "And how bold you are, how bold!"

"Why do you say that?"

"Because you do not make a secret of your crime. You commit crimes, but you have no secret. What does that mean except that you have a bold heart."

"I deny that I am a criminal."

"Then, upon my word, you go even further. Not only do you make no secret of your deeds, but you do not regard your deeds as crimes. You believe, I presume, that all things are right to those to whom they are right, eh, Mr. Weevely?"

Weevely interposed angrily. "All this is a lead, to get me to confess something. But it's no use."

Keeneyes rose. "Well, Mr. Weevely, since you have no secrets, and have committed no crimes, and have nothing to confess, there is no use for you and me to parley any longer."

"Yes, there is. I want to know what you charge me with."

"Why—since you are innocent?"

"Because I want to know what I'm to be accused of."

"Oh, that doesn't matter. You can prove how good you are, and then sue me for libel."

"At any rate, I mean to know what's in your mind, Mr. Zellers."

"Mr. Weevely, your mind couldn't hold it. It would run over."

"I mean to know what's in your mind concerning me, sir!" And suddenly the real-estate agent sprang between Keeneyes and the front door, locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

This extremely interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger, presenting the readers with some very dramatic happenings. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly urged to send in your subscription at once. Every family should take the Ledger, as humor and stories and pictures make life brighter and pleasanter for all, bringing health and entertainment and doing every one good. Be wise and attend to this today.

The Stolen White House.

(Continued from page nine.)

"Yes, but he would not close the gap."

"Mysterious fellow, isn't he?"

"He is, indeed. Lawless characters are always abroad, I dare say, but it has seldom been my lot to encounter them."

"Have you a plan now?"

"I wish to see if he will not soon give over the pursuit."

"Would it be possible," asked the Texan, trying an experiment, "to lead him directly to your home and call the servants to chastise him?"

"Well, perhaps—possibly it would do—but I don't know." She had stumbled over her words, and now she suddenly assumed a different air and added: "To be frank, sir, I don't want him to see my home."

Colgrave had suspected as much, and had brought forth the confession. Now, he wanted to know more, but was doubtful of success.

"Then you do not, perhaps, think it an affair of gallantry?"

"I fail to see that I have said so," Marcia retorted with some asperity. "It is sufficient that he is unwelcome. There, please pardon me if I am irritable, for this has unnerved me. He still follows."

She had taken a look through the glass behind them, and, as Colgrave could also see, had stated the conditions correctly. Her champion decided to abandon trying for the solution of the mystery and give all his attention to the pursuer.

"If you think it advisable," he said, "nothing will give me more pleasure than to leap out, wait for that knave and pound him into more or less visible resemblance to mincemeat."

"He would run away from you——"

"And in the meanwhile you could be running away from him."

"The plan would fail, and you would be left in the street alone, while I continued my fruitless struggle against him."

"I am not so absolutely certain that I should be left as you say, but your wishes prevail. Another plan. I suppose there is a law against the use of firearms hereabouts, but what if I shut my eyes to it and give the fellow a shot as a hint?"

"We should be promptly arrested, and that I can't endure."

"Agreed! Next, we might, as an experiment, turn sharply back, drive toward him and see what he would do."

"Oh! no, no! I don't want him to see me any nearer. Can't you—oh! can't you suggest something?"

Colgrave labored under the impression that he had already made several suggestions, but it would have been poor taste to say so. Another look backward showed the stranger rolling calmly along after them and the Texan grew irritated in turn.

"This has got to stop!" he declared. "I have a consuming passion to whip that fellow soundly, but your negative stands. This brings up the problem, what then?"

"I realize that I am asking a good deal of you," admitted Marcia plaintively. "Did I not have my turn at trying to find a way before you came?" I racked my brain for ideas in vain. I did hope your presence here would scare him off, but—what is left to do?"

"You think we can't outrun him, and I know of no way to double and twist while he is so near. I am in earnest when I advise fighting. Let us turn into a side street, stop short and then let me do the rest. Trust me, madam, I'll do it!"

"Your resolution is delightful, but fights are generally interrupted. I dare not venture it. A policeman would surely come."

"Perhaps I am not fertile in expedients, but I see only one chance left. Is this your father's carriage?"

"No, it is a public conveyance."

"Then why not desert it? Suppose we turn a corner where the scheme will have helpful aids, jump out and hide, and let the carriage go on its course empty? How is your pursuer to know?"

"You have it, you surely have!" she cried, delighted. "We are not more than a mile from my home, and it will be a pleasant walk. Let that villain chase the empty carriage, if he will. I know just the place, and it is not far off now. My driver must be paid and instructed so he will do his part naturally——"

She began to fumble in her purse. Colgrave volunteered to attend to the matter, but she declined peremptorily and found money. This she gave to the man and added her directions. It was done none too soon. They turned the corner, paused on a gravel way where the interruption to the fall of the horse's feet was of little moment, and in a few seconds the carriage was going its course empty.

At that point Marcia's father owned a leased house, and she could have found shelter if she had been so inclined, but she was eager to reach home. She had been aware that a vacant lot next door offered wide possibilities, and they had no sooner left the carriage than they crossed the sidewalk, plunged into the lot and were about to go when Colgrave

(Continued on page seventeen.)

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The House of Fear.

(Continued from page three.)

I saw Annabelle uncork the phial and hold it over the glass. I saw some drops of its contents fall slowly into the glass and the lips of the girl appeared to be counting them.

At length she ceased and restored the phial to its nesting place, then extinguished the lamp and I was again in darkness. The whole scene had not lasted long.

The terrible thought that flashed like a comet through my brain unnerved me. Was that sweet girl the Borgia of the House of Fear? After all, was she the one who was sapping the life of its master? But, then, there was the glass I had found by her bed, the glass with the odor of the nobi above it.

The mystery was too deep for me. I rushed from the room and halted not till I stood white-faced and pulseless in my own apartment.

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* * *

The Stolen White House.

(Continued from page sixteen.)

saw a builder's structure and realized that the space behind it was an excellent hiding-place. He drew Marcia to cover and himself took an advanced post, his hand upon his revolver.

He did not intend that the game of hide-and-seek should be continued indefinitely.

The second carriage came into sight, and the head of a man was partially thrust out as he looked ahead. Evidently satisfied at sight of the leading vehicle, he drew back, but immediately after a woman's face appeared at the same point. She, too, had a survey, and then the space became blank as the pursuit was continued.

Colgrave, however, stood like a statue.

"Can't we go now?" asked Marcia uneasily. "We must go. Come, come!"

Still her champion gazed after the vehicle and was silent.

"Oh! this will not do!" lamented the girl. "Sir, we must, we really must be moving. Come!"

"Yes, yes," Colgrave agreed stupidly. "Haste is necessary, and we will soon settle everything. Why, it's as good as settled now—our escape is, I mean—and they are beaten."

Marcia flashed him a sharp glance, surprised at the change in his manner. He who had previously been so alert and cool was now like one dazed, or so she thought. In this she formed no mistaken judgment. He was dazed, and it was sight of the other woman who had done it. When her head appeared at the window he had recognized her.

It was Mary Olland!

The fugitives gained the other street and continued their flight, but Colgrave was a very poor, stupid guard for beauty in distress. He wondered what Mary was doing, and the fear was active in his mind that, in helping Jason Starwake's daughter to escape, he might be dealing his own hopes and aims a grievous blow. Mary was no flighty-headed miss to run off at a tangent, and if she chased Marcia it was with a definite object.

That object might be to serve Colgrave, and he had upset the whole campaign.

He rallied and gave conscientious attention to his duty, walking by Miss Starwake's side with firm steps and watchful eyes. There was, at that moment, no sign of pursuit, and she calmed down quickly. Her face was toward home and she was hopeful.

Moreover, she was scanning his face attentively.

"Where have I seen you before?" she asked, plainly curious.

"Well, really, it may have been various times," Colgrave admitted, thinking of their childhood days. "I am sometimes in this section."

"That hardly seems to explain," and she knit her pretty brows in deep thought. "You have a bold, determined face, like one who can grapple with obstacles and overcome them, but that does not solve my perplexity—stop! I have it. You were by the river and found the broken boat."

"Are you the lady who was in the saddle?" and he counterfeited a trifle of surprise.

"Nobody else. How odd that we should meet again! I did not then know that you were chosen by fate to be my knight-errant, if I may so express it. To be more serious, I owe you many and most sincere thanks, and I am quite as grateful as you might wish. You were very good to sacrifie your time for an entire stranger, and delightfully ingenious in finding a way out of the dilemma. I am heartily grateful, sir."

She said it sweetly and prettily, and he made due reply, but he would have been

(Continued on page nineteen.)

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THE FAIRY CORNER

How Whirls Made Curls.

There was once a magician, and there was once a little girl with straight hair, and neither of them had ever heard of each other. And there was also a whirlwind, which had never heard of either of them. And yet these three interesting personalities had a great deal to do with each other in the course of time.

The whirlwind was a great bother, principally because it whirled. It whirled, and it whirled, and it whirled, all over the wide, wide world, and every one who saw or heard of it wondered why in the world it whirled.

"We can understand," said they, "why one should wish to waltz occasionally, but to spend one's life waltzing would dizzy the mind of anything that had a mind to dizzy."

But the whirlwind didn't mind its lack of mind, and it whirled, and it whirled and it whirled, until at last it whirled right into the magician, much to his annoyance and disgust. You would think it would have had better sense, but it didn't. It had whirled away the little sense it had started with.

Now the magician was dignified and proper, and he was distinctly annoyed when he found himself seized by the whirlwind and spinning round so quickly that he was only able to put his toe to the ground once for every spin. And when the whirlwind finally left him and whirled off into space, he sat down on the ground and remarked: "If that whirlwind and I ever meet again, there's going to be trouble."

There had been trouble the first time they met, as I have told you, but the magician planned another kind of trouble altogether for their next encounter.

And just then came up the little girl with straight hair (it was so singularly straight, it made her unhappy) and when she heard the words the magician was saying, the little girl with straight hair was so anxious to see the trouble that was to occur when the magician and the whirlwind met once more that she followed the magician about all day long. And said:

"What will you do, Mr. Magician, to the whirling whirlwind?"

And he replied: "My child, I shall crystalize it—ossify it—in other words, transfix it!" which very much impressed the little girl with straight hair.

And pretty-soon-before-long, the whirlwind came whirling back again, and found the magician and the little girl with straight hair all alone together. And it was just about to spin the magician as if he had been a top, when the magician discovered its intentions. He brought forth his magic book in a flash, turned to chapter 18, entitled "Whirls and Swirls," and read in a loud and forceful manner a mystic and magical formula.

The whirlwind heard, and the whirlwind whistled, and for a few seconds it whirled more furiously than ever; it just whirled and whirled!

But magic is magic, and it's no use doing anything when once it's started.

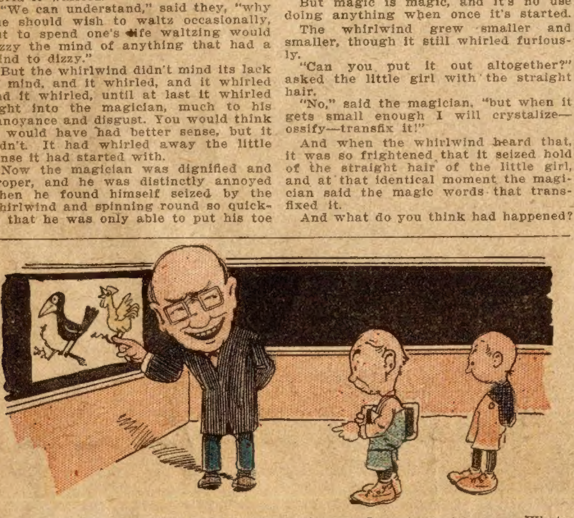
The whirlwind grew smaller and smaller, though it still whirled furiously.

"Can you put it out altogether?" asked the little girl with the straight hair.

"No," said the magician, "but when it gets small enough I will crystalize—ossify—transfix it!"

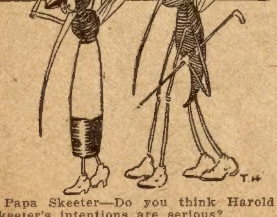
And when the whirlwind heard that, it was so frightened that it seized hold of the straight hair of the little girl, and at that identical moment the magician said the magic words that transfixed it.

And what do you think had happened? the little girl's hair was no longer straight, but hung in beautiful curls and waves! I simply can't describe how delighted she was. To have her hair all in whirls and swirls and curls seemed to her the loveliest thing imaginable, and all the other children admired it so much that they followed the magician about for days in the hope that he would discover another whirlwind.—Doris Webb in St. Nicholas.



The Professor—Here we have a common barnyard rooster and a crow. What are the most distinguishing features that you can observe?

The Star Pupil—The rooster crows and the crow roosts.



Papa Skeeter—Do you think Harold Skeeter's intentions are serious?

Mamma Skeeter—Sure. Every time he calls on daughter they turn down the fireflies.

Tot Wit

Sunday School Teacher—What is the meaning of charity, Stella?

Small Stella—It's when somebody's got a cold and you lend them your handkerchief.

Little Gertrude was visiting in the country, where she saw many unfamiliar things. "Grandpa," she queried one day as they were passing through a grove, "why is it that a woods is always full of trees?"

"Tommy," queried his small sister, "why can't chickens talk?"

"Oh, they don't have to talk," replied Tommy, who was glad of the chance to air his knowledge. "When they want anything they just pull their wishbones and get what they wish."

Small Robert did not know the meaning of death, so when he was told that a man across the street was dead he asked his 5-year-old sister what it meant to be dead. After a moment's hesitation she answered: "Why, to be dead means that—that—you are all in."

Johnny had been naughty, and his mother told him that he could choose between a whipping and being shut up in the cellar.

"Who will whip me—you or papa?" queried Johnny.

"Your papa," was the reply.

"Then it's the cellar for mine," rejoined the wise youngster.

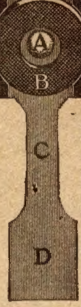
In Motor Circles.

"Mary, who is at the door?"

"A red runabout, ma'am."

"Not at home. I'm waiting for a green touring car."

Good-Bye, Corns
No Wait—No Pain



Just listen to this. There is a little plaster which holds a bit of soft wax—a wondrous invention called B & B wax. This little plaster is applied in a jiffy, and the pain of the corn stops instantly.

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B protects the corn, stopping the pain at once.
C wraps around the toe. It is narrowed to be comfortable.
D is rubber adhesive to fasten the plaster on.

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The Stolen White House.

(Continued from page seventeen.)

more satisfied if she had seen fit to cast light on the mystery of the night. He had served blindly, and blind he was doomed to remain, if she had her way.

They had been walking briskly and now drew near the Starwake home. Marcia grew so amiable and friendly that, having some previous knowledge of the ways of her sex, Colgrave began to expect a new turn to events, nor was he disappointed. Without departing from her ladylike demeanor, which still had a dim touch of reserve, she presently cast a smiling glance upward to his face.

"May I" she asked, "venture to ask one more favor of you?"

"I think so," he returned guardedly.

"I have had an adventure tonight, and that is something I detest. I should feel deeply humiliated if any of my father's household knew of this, and if you are seen explanations must necessarily follow. May I, without seeming rude, ask you to leave me a few blocks from the house, so I can appear there alone?"

Now, Colgrave had been debating a problem. He thought that, as a chosen and successful champion, he was about to have a chance to enter Jason's house on good footing, and as he was sure nobody would recognize him as the claimant for a hundred thousand dollars, it looked like a splendid opportunity to get into the circle where conspiracy walked hot-footed, after which all things were possible. But did he wish to take that radical step?

The point was not mentally decided when she, by making her request, settled it fully. He could not rebel against being dismissed, so he tried to avoid feeling humiliated and promptly agreed to her plan. Perhaps she read the feelings that beset him, for she touched his hand ever so lightly.

"If you knew you would not blame me," she added.

"I know that if you think it best you are excusable," he said, his vexation vanishing. "Pray say no more, for I really do not think I should fit well into your family circle. I am"—he hesitated for words and then found them—"too busy."

"Then I thank you once more and will say goodby. It is not known that I am out of the house, and the sooner I am within the better it will be for me. I have finished my night's task——"

Her hand had strayed, she fumbled at her waist, and then uttered a husky, frightened cry.

"Oh! it's gone, it's gone!" she feverishly exclaimed.

"Permit me to ask what is gone?" Colgrave queried.

"It—what I went for—the—the——"

She ended in an incoherent jumble, her fingers dancing around her waist-line as if they had gone out of their wits.

"A purse?" he asked.

"That would be nothing, absolutely nothing! Something far more valuable, far more filled with possibilities. It was attached to my belt, but even the belt is gone. I have been so overwrought that I did not notice it before. Oh! it was surely left in the carriage."

"Or lost in the street, since we left."

"No, no. I remember now that, while I was riding, it caught upon something in the carriage—a hook or something—and that I feared it had been torn away. I felt and found it in place, though it may even then have hung by a mere thread. Had it not been lost before we left the vehicle the—the thing that was attached would have struck against me, calling my attention to it. I know it dropped in the carriage."

"And," said Colgrave grimly, "we dismissed that carriage."

"We did, but we must find it again!" she cried almost fiercely.

"Is it as valuable as that?"

"It is more than valuable; it is imperatively necessary. I tried so hard to get it"—here she gave a little sob—"and now it's gone. We must find that carriage."

"I am at your service, madam."

She started and her face grew scarlet.

"It did not occur to me that I was saying 'we.' I meant that I must find it. Oh! tell me how, sir!"

"Where did you engage the carriage—on the street?"

"No, at the office of Princet's livery stable."

"That's better. We can easily locate the turnout. Pray direct me where to go."

"It seems so much to ask your further aid—so very much."

"When I begin an enterprise," replied Colgrave in sturdy resolution, "I like to see it through."

"You are kind, very kind," Marcia sighed.

He was being influenced by Marcia's manner and beauty, but as they walked rapidly toward the livery stable he remembered something else and grew dubious. Why had Mary Olland and her unknown companion pursued Miss Starwake? Was it possible that they wanted what she had lost?

Did he want to recover it for her, or was it possibly to his vital interest that she should not have it?"

If they found the—something—what was he to do about it?

The question was unsettled when Princet's office was reached. They found a well-appearing man at the desk and a stableman on a stool.

"This lady," explained Colgrave, "engaged a carriage here this evening. It was dismissed an hour or so ago, but she wishes to identify it and learn if a belt-bag was accidentally left there. Can you tell who the driver was?"

"I remember very well," was the polite answer. "The driver was Morely. He came in ten minutes ago, but I heard nothing about a lost article."

"Is the carriage or Morely here now?"

"No, sir. The carriage went out again immediately, just as it was, horse, driver and everything."

"Where did it go?"

"That I don't know." A fine looking gentleman was waiting for a chance, and he engaged it at once. They left five minutes ago."

Colgrave cast a glance at Marcia's downcast, worried face and began to pity her.

"Is there absolutely no way of finding that turnout promptly?" he demanded.

"I really know of none. There are many directions in which they may have gone, and I don't even know who the gentleman was who went with Morely."

The stableman had risen from the stool, and, unseen by any of the others, was eagerly waiting to speak.

"Scuse me," he now interrupted, "but I know Morely's fare, and know his name."

"What was it?"

"His name is Adam Smith!"

(Continued next week.)

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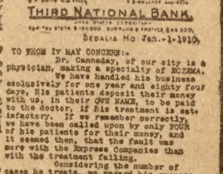

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Treatment and literature sent in plain wrapper.

Billy's Misfortune.

There is a billy goat that lives on a farm in Georgia. If it had not been for a railroad company it might be necessary to say that the goat used to live on the farm. Probably he would have died without the railroad company's help. You see, the billy, like some small boys and a few small girls farther north, liked to do things he should not do. He used to trot down to the pasture fence near the railroad track and look disagreeably at the passing trains and then butt his head against the fence in a disagreeable manner. He butted once too often. His horns caught in the fence and there he was held a prisoner, forced to look out on the contemptible railroad track. He might have been there yet if a man who rides to town and back every weekday on the railroad had not noticed the trouble the goat was in. The man saw what was the matter after Billy had been standing there three days, and he told the train dispatcher about it. The train dispatcher is a good natured man, and so he told the crew of a passenger train to stop out in the country and unhook Billy from the fence. This they did, while the passengers looked on approvingly, and hungry and thirsty goat made his way uncertainly toward home and the food and drink he had missed for three days.

Uncle Pennywise Says.

Marriage is a lottery, but better let a girl select her own ticket.

OUR WONDERFUL DOLL OUTFIT

ALL FREE

10 Different Presents—All Free

This is positively the most liberal and biggest Doll Offer ever made. Think of the endless amount of pleasure a little girl can have with this wonderful collection of presents. All are given **Absolutely Free** to advertise and introduce our business in your locality. All that is required is a few minutes—at the outside not over half a day of your time. Read below and send coupon and we will take care of the rest.

Description of Presents

Our life-size doll is bigger than the ordinary baby—nearly two feet high. She is beautifully and stylishly dressed from head to toe, including large picture hat, trimmed with plume, lace, etc., fancy sateen dress with yoke, complete underwear, stockings, slippers with buckles, etc. Bisque body, jointed arms and legs, long curly waxen hair; opens and closes her eyes.

Dolly's buggy or go-cart is substantially made and amply large enough for Dolly to sit in, as shown in the above picture. It is guaranteed to run smoothly. Dolly's little chatelaine watch looks just like a real watch, and she is very proud of it.

Our little baby doll is very sweet and lovely, with long hair.

The five piece furniture set is the cutest doll set you ever saw—regular dining-room table already set up and four upright dining-room chairs.

Just imagine the good times the little girl can have dressing dolly, making clothes for baby doll, and taking both out riding in the go-cart, serving dinner and tea, etc., etc.

Do not forget our little doll's playhouse, which is given extra for promptness, as explained elsewhere in this offer.

How to Secure All

If you want my ten grand doll premiums, simply sign your name on the coupon below and send to me promptly. I will then send you twelve of my new style, large, 16x20 inches, all **gold** illuminated text pictures, with decorations. These pictures are brand new and made especially for me; none like them on the market. You distribute these gold text pictures free on my special plan—collecting 25c with each picture. Then you send me the $3.00 collected and the same day received I will ship you the big dressed doll, go-cart, five-piece dining-room set, baby doll, doll's chatelaine watch and also doll's house for promptness—not one, but **all ten presents.**

If you do not care to distribute my new gold text pictures on my easy plan, after receiving them, they can be returned at my expense. Nearly everyone, however, who sees my new pictures and hears about my new plan will jump at the offer, and you can do the distributing in a very little time. All you need to do now is to send the coupon without delay.

Doll's House Extra

Our handsome little Doll's House is decorated in colors, with painted chimney, windows, porch, etc. It is given extra and in addition to the other nine presents included in this offer, **just for promptness.** Send the coupon below **promptly**—at once, and get this nice little Doll's House as an extra present to complete the combination.

Send this coupon today

No Money Required My Company is a two and a half million dollar corporation, and I furnish highest references. Remember, if you do not care to distribute my new gold text pictures on my new plan—all well and good. I run all the risks, guarantee my presents and pay all postage. Don't fail to send the coupon at once and take advantage of this wonderful offer now. 1,000 grateful letters and large illustration of premiums in colors will be sent you.

M. CLARK, Sec'y, 107-111 So. Clinton St., Chicago, Ill.

Just Send This Coupon

CUT OUT ON THIS LINE

M. CLARK
Sec'y
107-111 So. Clinton St.
CHICAGO

Dear Sir:—Send me your twelve new all-gold illuminated text pictures to distribute on your new plan, which will entitle me to all your nine doll presents and the extra present for promptness. I am under no obligation to distribute pictures after receiving your plan and can return at your expense.

Name ______________________

Address ______________________

311 ______________________